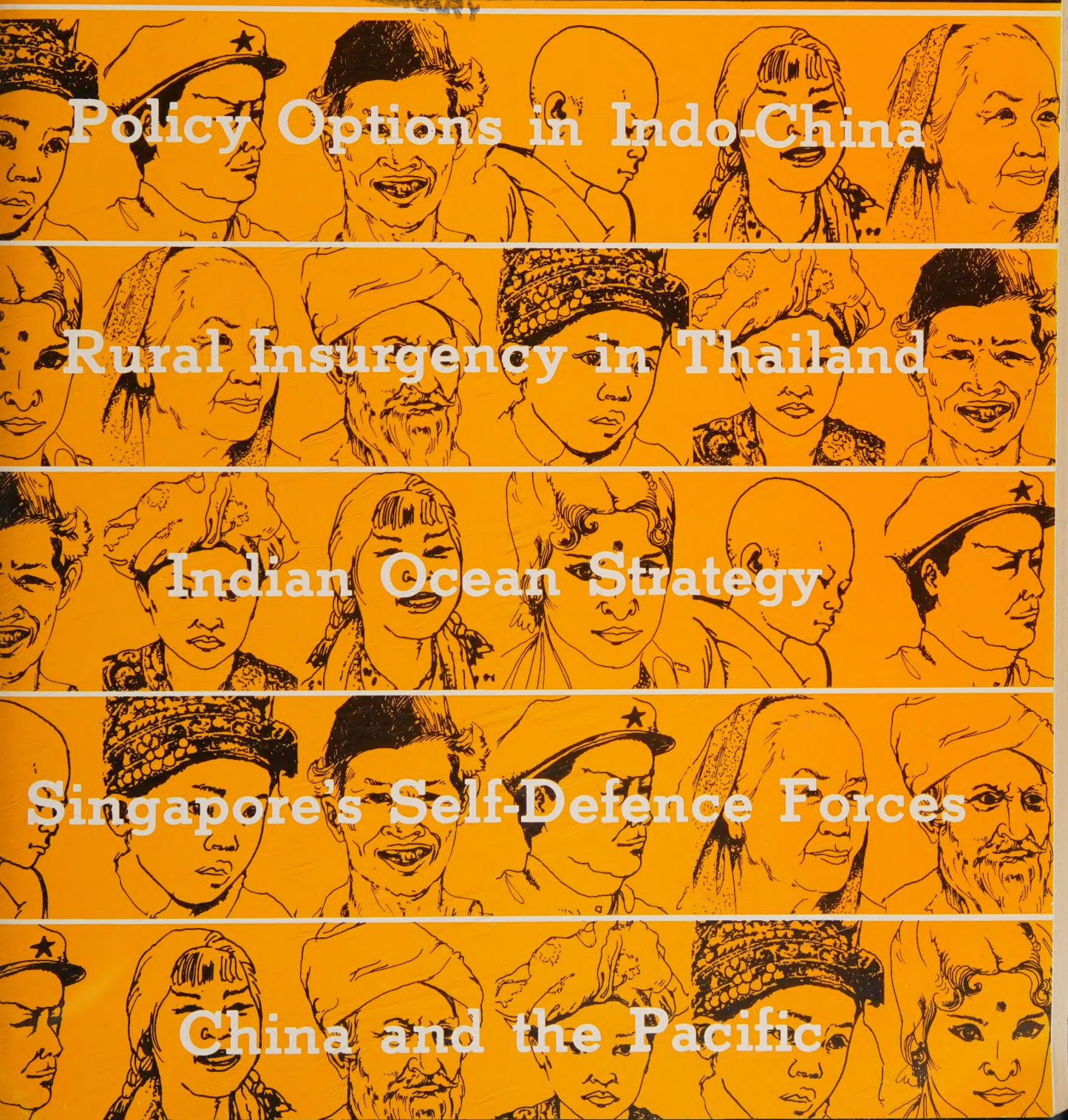
South-East Asian

SPECTRUM

U.I.C.C.
SEP 5 1975

Volume 3, No. 3, April 1975



Policy Options in Indo-China

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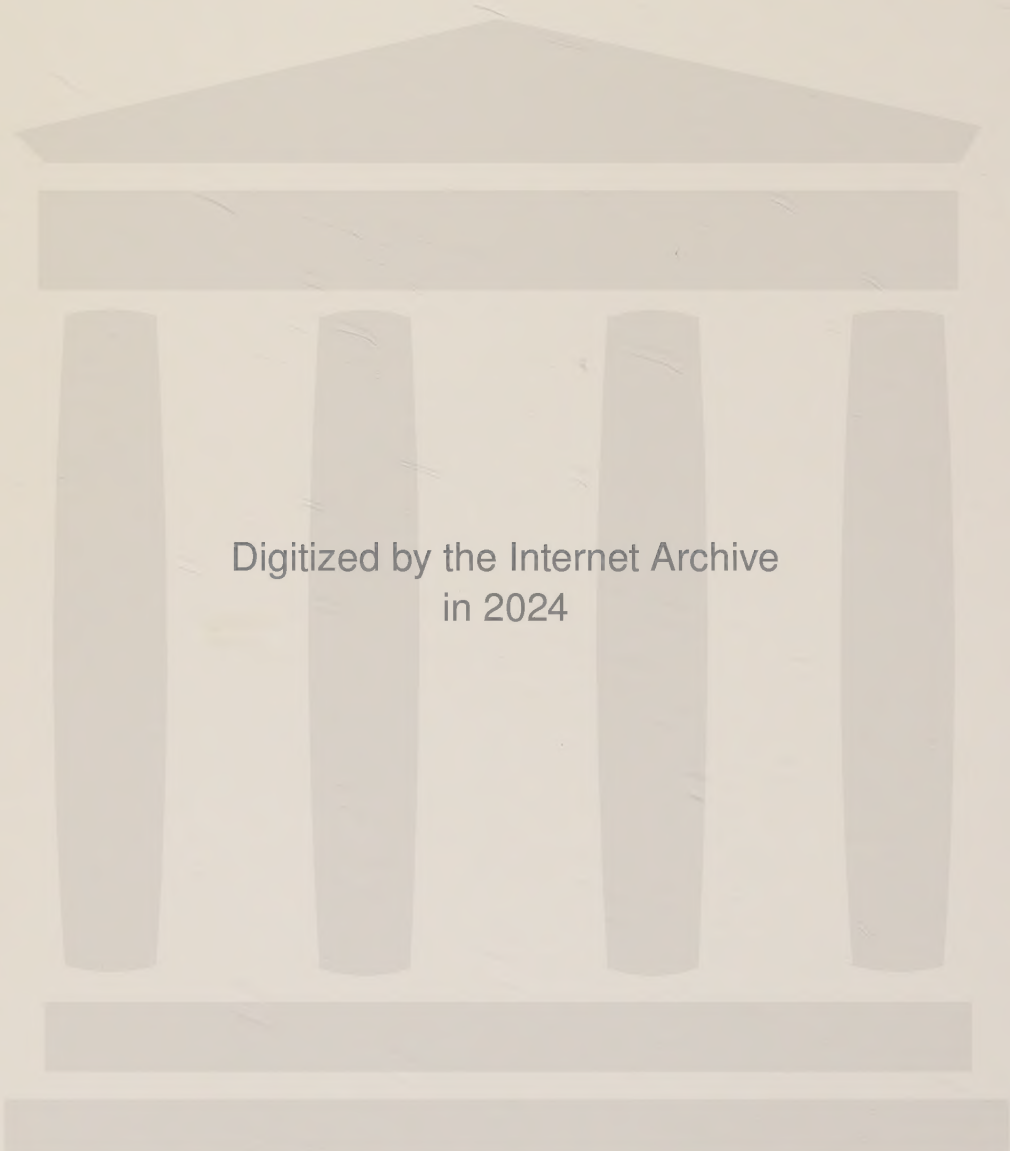

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Dear Sir/Madam,

You have for some time been receiving SEATO's quarterly academic journal, South-East Asian SPECTRUM, the latest edition of which accompanies this letter.

I am in the process of reviewing the distribution of the journal, and I should be grateful if you would indicate whether you wish to continue receiving it.

If I do not hear from you, I shall assume that you no longer wish to receive SPECTRUM.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Nash
PUBLICATIONS OFFICER

Enclosure

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Published by the –

South-East Asia Treaty Organization, SEATO
Headquarters, P.O. Box 517, Bangkok, Thailand.

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INDO-CHINA: *"..... the US has relatively little ability to control the shape of the final settlement in Indo-China. This country (the US) cannot control the decisions of the DRV's leadership, and there is no reason to assume that either China or the USSR could do better, even if they chose to attempt it. A military threat from North Vietnam against Saigon could only be countered effectively by a comparable response from the US. That response is not likely to be forthcoming."*

The Indo-China Question: an Analysis of Policy Options

Alan Ned Sabrosky

The signing of ceasefire agreements in 1973 for Laos and Vietnam, combined with a partial reduction in the intensity of the conflict in Cambodia, established a fragile equilibrium in Indo-China. The expressed intention of these arrangements was to end the Second Indo-China War (1) and entailed the following: the cessation of formal hostilities throughout the region (2); in-place ceasefires in Laos and South Vietnam; the maintenance of the politico-military *status quo* in those two States, with both Communist (3) and pro-Western government forces in control of parts of each country; the withdrawal of all American combat forces from Indo-China and the termination of the US military role in that region; and an eventual political settlement among the indigenous parties on mutually acceptable terms, without American or other foreign intervention. The attainment of such a settlement, of course, was contingent on the realization of the first four points.

However it seems at the moment that there is only a remote possibility that the fundamental political questions in Indo-China will be resolved peacefully. Even a transformation of the overt conflict into a predominantly political contest, as some have suggested might occur (4), would not necessarily make a peaceful settlement more likely. Such a transformation would basically depend on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's (DRV) rejection of the use of military force. But Communist strategy does not make the distinction, common in other societies, between the military and the political aspects of conflict. Instead, both are part of a continuum along which the Communist policy-makers move in accordance with the situation (5). Thus any Communist acceptance of expressly political competition within the Indo-Chinese States (and especially in South Vietnam) would likely be only a transitory phase in the DRV's conduct of policy.

In addition, of the four essential pre-conditions to such a settlement, only one – the withdrawal of American combat forces from the war has been met. American forces have been taken out of bases in the region, in accordance with the terms of the ceasefire agreements. Combat operations over Cambodia (as well as Laos and the two Vietnams) have been ended. American air and naval forces remain in areas adjacent to Indo-China, but do not engage in operations there. Beyond that, conflict has continued throughout Indo-China, particularly in South Vietnam and more recently Cambodia. Each of the contending parties is still attempting to expand the area under its control, while nominally conforming to the ceasefire terms. The International Control Commission, now composed of Iran, Hungary, Indonesia, and Poland, is ineffectual. Considerable reinforcements of men and material from the DRV have been introduced into South Vietnam, and most of the fourteen

North Vietnamese divisions there have been brought up to strength.

In general, therefore, the precarious ceasefire seems to balance on the edge of complete collapse (6). Moreover, the balance of power throughout Indo-China has slowly been moving in favour of the Communist forces. In Laos, the *de facto* partition of the country gives the Pathet Lao a strong position. It also provides secure bases for North Vietnamese forces in Laos or *en route* to other areas, as well as enhancing Communist control of the vital Ho Chi Minh Trail into South Vietnam. In Cambodia, the continuation of open warfare at varying levels of intensity has left the pro-Western Cambodian Government in a precarious position. The Khmer Rouge and the North Vietnamese forces are in control of the greater part of Cambodia, including the staging areas along the border of South Vietnam and additional infiltration routes into that country. Finally, in South Vietnam itself, Communist forces have strengthened their hold over large sectors of the country, including Quang Tri Province along the now defunct Demilitarized Zone (7). In spite of heavy losses during the 1972 campaigns, the Communist military position is markedly stronger now than at the time of the ceasefire. The relative positions of the various Communist forces improved significantly in the course of the fighting since then. This is recognized in all of the ceasefire agreements, even though the Communist forces in South Vietnam had to accept a settlement which was unsatisfactory from their perspective (8).

The character of the final political settlement of the Indo-China dispute is obviously still uncertain. As the fighting in that area continues, the question of which policies the US should pursue remains with us. This paper focusses on that issue. In it, we will briefly outline the basic premises on which our discussion is based as well as certain general factors which appear to influence developments leading to a settlement. We will then examine the broad policy options open to the "key actors" (9) as well as their implications for the eventual Indo-China settlement.

* * * * * * *

OUR analysis has three basic premises. First, *the final political settlement in Indo-China is a function of the outcome of the conflict in South Vietnam.* That is, the collapse of a pro-Western government in Saigon would virtually guarantee similar developments in Cambodia and Laos, although the converse does not hold. A change in status in Laos would have no direct bearing on the outcome in South Vietnam, as the Communists already hold those areas required for bases and infiltration routes into that country. The collapse of a pro-Western government in Cambodia would increase the pressure on South Vietnam, but not necessarily to a significant degree. As with Laos, Communist forces now have almost uncontested control of sanctuaries and infiltration routes in Cambodia adjacent to South Vietnam.

Second, *what finally happens in South Vietnam itself is primarily a function of what is done by North Vietnam and the United States.* The basic objective of the non-Communist Indo-Chinese States is simply to survive by maintaining the *status quo.* There is no likelihood that any of these States has the capability to reverse the existing situation without external assistance. No other regional States have interests in Indo-China sufficiently strong to make direct intervention on behalf of South Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia a desirable policy option (10). Similarly, direct intervention by either China or the Soviet Union on behalf of North Vietnam is unnecessary in the present situation. Indirect intervention in the form of economic or military aid programmes to either side is unlikely to alter the **form** of the final political settlement, although the relative extent of such assistance may affect the **timing** of that settlement. It is also clear that neither the United Nations nor any other inter-governmental organization will be able to influence the outcome to a significant degree.

Finally, *within this context, and given the US role under the Nixon Doctrine, policy initiative is with North Vietnam.* American military disengagement from Indo-China, coupled with North Vietnam's retention of a major military capability in South Vietnam, gives the DRV the military initiative. The aura of failure and domestic dissent attending the American withdrawal from Vietnam, as contrasted with the North Vietnamese sense of success at having fought the United States to a standstill, gives the DRV the psychological initiative. The relatively passive, reactive role assumed by the United States under the Nixon Doctrine, when compared

with the more active, expansionist posture taken by North Vietnam, gives the DRV the diplomatic initiative. Taken individually, of course, any one of these would not give North Vietnam a clear policy initiative (11). But taken together, they place the US in a position of having to respond to North Vietnamese initiatives, whatever the relative degree of success or failure attending the American military involvement in the war (12).

* * * * * * *

IT is clear that the policy options open to each of the key actors in Indo-China are subject to certain extra-national influences (13). This does not imply that the range of North Vietnamese and American policy options is affected by these external considerations. It does suggest, however, that various developments in the international system may have some effect on the relative probability that a given option will be adopted. This applies equally to policy initiatives and policy responses, although not necessarily in the same way.

Four general factors currently help define the international *milieu* within which North Vietnam and the United States interact over Indo-China. These are: the developing multipolarity of the international system; the developing Sino-Soviet-American relationships; the implications of the Nixon Doctrine for US policy in Asia; and the reduced significance of the East-West ideological division in international affairs.

Although there is a tendency for some to speak of a "multipolar system" in the present tense, such a description is only partially accurate. That is, the major-Power subsystem (which defines polarity) is still bipolar in a strategic sense, but it has become tripolar in terms of diplomatic status (with China joining the United States and the Soviet Union) and multipolar on the economic dimension (with the addition of Japan and Western Europe). Nevertheless, the developing international system clearly reflects a greater dispersal of power than was the case a decade ago.

For Indo-China, the most significant aspect of this trend is the increasing strength of China and Japan. This has gradually reduced the already slight possibility that some settlement of affairs there could be determined by either the US or the Soviet Union. Yet it appears that the impact of this trend on North Vietnam and the US has been quite different. By eliminating the need for it to rely on a single major ally, North Vietnam has acquired a greater flexibility in its selection of policy options than was previously the case. In contrast to this, the US has lost the ability to depend on support along any dimension from its erstwhile allies. It now has less flexibility in dealing with the Indo-China question than it did at the onset of the war.

There are two aspects to the question of Sino-Soviet-American relationships. One is the changing American relationships with both China and the Soviet Union; the other is the existence of the Sino-Soviet rift. Both China and the USSR are apparently interested in developing more amicable relationships with the US in great part because of their own rivalry. The present policy of *detente* is far from immutable, of course. Sudden reversals of policy have occurred before in all three major-Powers, and this could easily take place again. The apparent Soviet-American confrontation during the 1973 Yom Kippur War is indicative of the fragility of *detente*. But overt conflict is unlikely at present. Similarly, the Sino-Soviet rift may lessen in intensity, although it will not entail the establishment of a common policy toward Indo-China in the near future.

The impact of this trend on the Indo-China settlement has been the reverse of the trend toward multipolarity. That is, in this case, the US has achieved greater flexibility than it had possessed earlier, while North Vietnam's flexibility has been reduced. This was evidenced in 1972 during the Spring Offensive, as well as in the American air attacks against Hanoi in December of that year. There is no certainty that either China or the USSR value any *detente* with the US so much that they would respond again as they did in 1972. Nevertheless, the possibility that this could occur must be taken into consideration by the DRV's leadership.

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THE reduced US profile in Indo-China envisaged under the Nixon Doctrine has clearly reduced American flexibility in that area, while concurrently increasing that of North Vietnam. The implication of this development is that, given another situation comparable to the 1964-1965 period in South Vietnam, the US would al-

most certainly end its participation in the conflict and withdraw. This may not hold in the case of a direct invasion across an international boundary. But it undoubtedly would apply to an invasion even thinly disguised as an insurgency.

In addition, this means that the US will have more difficulty finding allies in another Asian crisis than it did in the Vietnamese case. Few nations would have any reason to commit themselves to assist the US, since it is clear that major American support in the face of an internal threat to their own security would probably not materialize. A crucial question to which American policy-makers must address themselves, however, is how long our current allies in that region will remain closely affiliated with the United States under these circumstances.

The implications of the reduced East-West ideological division are mixed for both the United States and North Vietnam. It certainly means that neither nation can depend on direct support from an ideologically compatible State, even though formal expressions of sympathy may be forthcoming. That is, nations which are increasingly tending to follow their national interests rather than their ideological inclinations are decidedly unreliable allies in an ideologically-divided conflict. On the other hand, both the US and North Vietnam have enhanced their diplomatic maneuverability by occasionally enlisting the support of ideologically opposing states. On balance, however, this trend has probably reduced the flexibility of both States by increasing the degree of uncertainty under which they must act. When one's allies are unreliable and one's opponents (other than the direct adversary) undefined, then caution is clearly in order, particularly for a State which has been unsuccessful in prosecuting a recent conflict.

The general thrust of these four factors appears to be disadvantageous to the US. This suggests that North Vietnam not only has the initiative in dealing with the Indo-China dispute. It also may have more flexibility in its selection of policy options. This situation is not likely to change throughout this decade.

* * * * * * *

EACH of the key actors in Indo-China has a range of policy options open to it. In addition, different sets of North Vietnamese policy initiatives and American policy responses will generate different outcomes. In examining these options, we will focus on general lines of policy (e.g., military intervention) rather than actions taken to implement that policy (e.g., tactical air strikes). We are essentially concerned at this point with evaluating the advantages and disadvantages which flow from the adoption of a given policy option by each of the key actors. The relative utility of each option will be considered in the concluding section. After outlining the basic characteristics of each nation's options, we will discuss their influence on the outcomes of the Indo-China dispute.

* * * * * * *

THE DRV has three broad policy options open to it at this time. *Option 1* is to *apply limited military pressure throughout South Vietnam in conjunction with political activities.* This is basically a continuation of the *status quo.* It permits the DRV to act through the formal auspices of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), thereby retaining a low diplomatic profile while continuing to direct policy. It also allows Communist forces to maintain sufficient pressure on South Vietnam to either retard or curtail its economic recovery from the war. It permits Communist forces to inhibit the reorganization and strengthening of South Vietnam's armed forces (ARVN), thereby reducing the latter's ability to defend itself simultaneously against external invasion and internal revolution without American assistance.

The advantages inherent in this option are clear. There is a strong possibility that this policy would eventually allow the DRV to gain control of South Vietnam (and with it the remainder of Indo-China) with no significant risk of a renewed American military intervention. This would not only minimize the losses which North Vietnam would sustain in what would be the final stages of this war. It would also permit the DRV to rebuild its own territory and to reconstitute its economy, thereby reducing its dependence on other countries for agricultural products and finished industrial goods.

Yet there are disadvantages with this approach as well. The longer that South Vietnam remains independent of the DRV, the greater the possibility that the Saigon government will be able to rebuild its economy, strengthen its armed forces, and

establish a firm control over its own territory (14). Even with sustained North Vietnamese military pressure, it is likely that time is on the side of South Vietnam. Given a sufficiently long respite, it may develop the capability to withstand any direct threat to its sovereignty from North Vietnam. This would preclude the DRV's attainment of its basic goal: the unification of Vietnam under the Hanoi regime.

Option 2 is a stronger approach. It is *to resume full-scale military operations against South Vietnam in the near future.* This implies a renewal of the massive conventional operations conducted throughout 1972, supported by sub-conventional operations wherever possible. This option also presumes that the North Vietnamese leadership had decided that it was in their interests to press for an immediate settlement of the dispute on their own terms.

This option would have the advantage for the DRV of curtailing South Vietnam's economic and military recovery. It would also permit North Vietnam to achieve (if its attack were successful) its basic goal without carrying out another prolonged conflict. It would allow Hanoi to consolidate its own position in Indo-China as the dominant regional power. Finally, it would give the DRV an early opportunity to extend its influence beyond that region into other parts of South-East Asia.

Yet this overtly military solution to a complex problem also entails potential disadvantages. Even if successful, another major campaign would mean incurring additional heavy losses in the DRV's forces. North Vietnam has certainly not been deterred by this prospect before, particularly when its objective was to induce the US to withdraw from the war. Yet now Hanoi has another objective: the minimization of its own dependency on external support and assistance, especially that from China and the Soviet Union. But the greater the losses sustained by Hanoi in any future operations, the longer the required period of reconstruction and the greater North Vietnam's dependency on external assistance.

On the other hand, there is the possibility that such an offensive would be unsuccessful. In case of another failure comparable to that of 1972, North Vietnam would require at least two more years of preparation before this would again be a feasible option. That length of time would probably be sufficient for South Vietnam to rebuild itself enough to withstand another offensive. It would certainly strengthen Saigon's hold on the country, as well as its own self-confidence. In sum, were this option adopted and successfully pursued, it would most quickly achieve North Vietnam's stated goal. If it were unsuccessful, it is unlikely that Hanoi would be able to unify Vietnam under its leadership within this decade.

In contrast to the preceding approach, *Option 3* is the most moderate policy. *It is to terminate all military activities in South Vietnam and try to achieve a political settlement via plebiscite or negotiation with Saigon.* This would imply an acceptance by Hanoi of the literal interpretation of the 1973 cease-fire agreements, as well as a desire on its part to avoid unnecessary and possibly counter-productive losses in continued military activities. If successful, it would be a major military and diplomatic victory for North Vietnam. It would have achieved its goal of unification and control without having sustained additional losses. It would also have gained recognition for Communism as a popular form of government in general, and for its own legitimacy in Vietnam in particular.

The prospects that a plebiscite might be in favour of the DRV (if the populations of *both* Vietnams were allowed to participate) are quite good. The areas under Communist control would certainly vote as Hanoi wished, both in North Vietnam proper and in the PRG-controlled sectors of South Vietnam. In these circumstances, even a slight defection or abstention on the part of the South Vietnamese population would probably be sufficient to give Hanoi a majority vote on the issue of unification (15). Saigon could choose to ignore such a vote, of course (as would Hanoi under the same circumstances), but the position of the South Vietnamese government would be extremely untenable. Additional assistance from formerly friendly nations would probably not be forthcoming. Under these conditions, Hanoi could initiate a renewed offensive with greatly increased prospects for success without any significant risk of intervention by another nation.

The disadvantages of this approach are somewhat intangible. There is the possibility that a plebiscite would go against North Vietnam, even with a disciplined vote in the Communist-controlled territories on its behalf. Under these

circumstances, Hanoi could easily ignore the vote and pursue either a politico-military (option 1) or military (option 2) solution. Yet losing the plebiscite would also invalidate its claim to be the legitimate government of Vietnam, and thereby cost it much of its non-Communist public support in Western nations. This would increase the possibility that a renewal of military operations on its part would be met with a renewed intervention by external Powers. The ambiguity of the origins of, and justification for, the Second Indo-China War was a major factor in the lack of international support for Saigon during that period. The unambiguity of a North Vietnamese invasion of a territory which had formally demonstrated its preference for independence would certainly not work to Hanoi's advantage. It would strengthen Saigon's position, whether or not the latter was able to capitalize on it.

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FOR its part, the US has four options open to it. *Option 1* is to *continue the present policy of providing non-military assistance teams and relying on international supervision of the ceasefire to eventually end hostilities.* As with North Vietnam's first option, this is simply a continuation of present American policy. This is clearly a "low profile" option which implicitly rejects a premise on which the original US intervention was based. That is, it suggests that the US no longer considers itself obligated to guarantee the continued existence of South Vietnam as an independent State. The US would still provide economic assistance and technical advice, and would encourage other States friendly to both countries to do likewise. But no American military forces would be reintroduced into the theatre of operations.

The principal advantage of this option is that it allows the US to retain what prestige it salvaged in the ceasefire agreements and to avoid becoming reinvolved in an extremely costly and divisive war. It also has the political advantage of allowing the US to claim that it has fulfilled its basic commitments to its ally and to the principles of international negotiation for the resolution of disputes, while still pursuing its policies of *detente* with China and the Soviet Union.

The primary disadvantage of this policy option is that the US would have conceded its inability and unwillingness to have any substantial effect on the final political settlement. Were the outcome to be demonstrably unfavourable in the light of the protracted American commitment to South Vietnam, the credibility of other American commitments and obligations would certainly be impaired. To refuse any further participation in the Indo-China embroglio is certainly politically prudent at the present time. But it also may be diplomatically counter-productive in the long term.

Option 2 reflects an attempt by the US to exert more influence on the final outcome of the Indo-China question. It is to *provide indirect military assistance to South Vietnam via an Asian ally, coupled with a continuation of the present form of direct assistance from the US.* This would entail an American policy of subsidizing either national contingents or mercenaries in sufficient numbers to significantly affect the outcome of the conflict. It implies a recognition that the ceasefire is inadequate, and that either present American interests or the credibility of future American commitments requires this action. It could also involve the reintroduction of American advisers, although only those directly attached to the non-Vietnamese contingents.

This policy option permits the US to have some indirect impact on the outcome in a manner which does not involve the reintroduction of American combat forces to the region. It combines aspects of the Nixon Doctrine with earlier policies. That is, it provides military assistance to States threatened with internal warfare and legitimizes the use of "collective security" forces to combat that insurgency. Yet it continues the "low profile" currently espoused by the US Administration.

There are, however, potentially serious political disadvantages with this approach, both in domestic and international affairs. This would certainly arouse a considerable amount of domestic political opposition, which could include invoking the relevant provisions of the 1973 "War Powers Act." There is no guarantee that this policy could be sustained long enough for it to be successful. In addition, US relations with Third World nations would undergo further deterioration. Nations and movements inimicable to the US would be able to capitalize on an apparent US policy of using "American funds and Asian lives" to achieve an outcome desired by

this country. This would apply even if the policy were successful. If it were not successful, it would certainly increase the probability that the conflict would spread to the Asian "host country" for the forces committed to Indo-China.

Option 3 is a *renewed American military intervention in South Vietnam, with or without the sanction of the UN.* . This could entail only the commitment of air and naval forces in support of South Vietnam, or it could include the deployment of American ground combat forces to the area. Advisers would also be re-assigned to Vietnamese units. This policy would involve an American effort to maximize its influence on the final outcome. The net effect of this option would be a repetition of the original military intervention, albeit (hopefully) in a more efficiently conducted manner. In order to be successful, it would require the following methods: the re-establishment of American base camps in areas no longer held by South Vietnamese forces; the reintroduction of American air forces over North Vietnam, and probably Laos and Cambodia as well; and the use of American ground forces against North Vietnam proper. Any other actions would simply bring about a repetition of the experience of the Second Indo-China War.

One advantage could flow from this option. This would be a clear reassertion by the US of its determination to support any ally which requires that support, and to see a course of action through to an outcome acceptable to the US. It would reinforce the credibility of American commitments to allied States, while underlining US unwillingness to permit the gradual attenuation of American prestige and power.

The disadvantages associated with this option, however, are considerable and far-reaching. There is no guarantee that the reintroduction of American combat forces to South Vietnam would be more successful now than in the past, even if it were feasible to take such a step. Militarily, a reintroduction of American forces would be an extremely precarious venture. The original commitment of more than 540,000 men was unable to achieve strategic success, even though tactical successes were commonplace. There is no reason to assume that anything less than that number of men would be effective in a new situation, given the increased strength of regular Communist forces in South Vietnam. The deployment of American ground forces against North Vietnam would require assurances from China and the USSR that they would not actively oppose such an action. Without those guarantees, an American military operation in that sector would be most inadvisable.

Diplomatically, this option would certainly be counter-productive. If the movement toward Sino-American and Soviet-American *detente* has any significance whatsoever, it would be adversely affected by a renewed American military presence in Indo-China. This does not argue for or against the merits of the developing Sino-American and Soviet-American relationships. It simply notes that the diplomatic consequences for those relationships of this option would be considerable and unfavourable.

Politically, the adoption of this policy is unfeasible. The War Powers Act would certainly be invoked, with little possibility that the continuation of any initial American involvement would be permitted. There is not a sufficiently large base of popular and political support for another US military intervention in Indo-China, either now or in the immediate future, whatever the consequences of American inaction for our allies in that area. Moreover, even with the era of "good feeling" accompanying the new Administration in Washington, there is no indication that President Ford would be able to undertake such an intervention without incurring grave political losses.

Finally, *Option 4* is the *curtailment of all US assistance to, and support for, South Vietnam.* This entails a complete American disengagement from Indo-China. It includes the end of economic assistance and technical advice to the South Vietnamese government, as well as the termination of diplomatic relations at some point thereafter. This would have the effect of isolating the South Vietnamese government in an increasingly hostile diplomatic environment. This option would eliminate the possibility that the US might become reinvolved in the conflict, inadvertently or otherwise. It would underline the American withdrawal from key affairs on the mainland of Asia, with a concurrent increase in the roles of China and (to a lesser extent) the USSR. Whether or not this would be to our advantage depends on the extent of the American commitment to *detente* with the USSR and China, as well as the strength of that new major-power relationship.

IN general, the probable rank-ordering of preferred policy options by the US and North Vietnam is a function of three factors. These are as follows: the progress of the Indo-China conflict to date; the degree of interest each nation has in achieving its preferred outcome; and the advantages and disadvantages associated with the selection of a given option.

For North Vietnam, the progress of the Indo-China conflict to date has been a qualified success. Significant gains have been made by Communist forces in Laos and Cambodia, as well as in South Vietnam. North Vietnam also has one of the best-equipped and combat-proven military establishments in the world, given its size and strategic situation. These gains have been extremely costly, however, and after more than a decade of major conflict the DRV still faces a relatively strong South Vietnam. The most important implication of the war so far has been North Vietnam's success in withstanding the application of American military power for nearly eight years. By having fought the world's strongest Power to a standstill and gaining substantial concessions in the 1973 ceasefire agreements, the DRV has increased its prestige, its regional status, and its self-confidence. The Communist leadership in Hanoi clearly considers itself to be in the ascendancy in Indo-China affairs.

North Vietnam's interests in the outcome of the Indo-China settlement are relatively clear. For the DRV, the retention of its status in Indo-China, the unification of Vietnam under its direction, and the extension of its influence into adjacent areas remain primary interests. It has demonstrated a willingness in recent years to absorb heavy losses in pursuit of those interests. There is no reason to assume that the DRV is less willing to do so now, particularly if American forces were not re-engaged in the fighting. In addition, from Hanoi's perspective, the only significant considerations associated with a given policy option concern the degree to which it furthers the DRV's pursuit of its primary interests. For North Vietnam, the following rank-ordering of options applies:

(1) Option 2: Full-scale military operations
(2) Option 1: Continuation of *status quo*
(3) Option 3: Plebiscite and/or negotiation with South Vietnam

A major consideration in this ordering of policy options is the need to forestall South Vietnam's recovery from the war to date. If successful, a major military offensive would achieve that, unify the country under Hanoi's control, and do so with fewer losses than would be sustained later. Even if this offensive were unsuccessful, it would inflict heavy casualties on South Vietnam's own military establishment. It would also disrupt much of South Vietnam's economy and political infrastructure. Moreover, the failure of this policy option would not preclude North Vietnam's activation of either of the other options. In fact, it could easily fall back into a continuation of the *status quo,* hoping thereby to keep South Vietnam sufficiently off balance with periodic fighting to enable the DRV to launch another offensive at a later date. Even the plebiscite would still be a viable option, particularly if North Vietnam reverted to a more protracted approach. The addition of more territory in South Vietnam to the existing Communist holdings would enhance the latter's prospects in such a referendum. As with the primary option, the failure to unify the country via a plebiscite would still leave North Vietnam the option of pursuing a limited-war strategy.

The overall situation is quite different insofar as the United States is concerned. For this country, the events of the past eight years have been extremely unsettling. In many respects, the failure of the US to achieve its initial goals in South Vietnam while sustaining serious losses in men, material, and prestige have been a watershed in our foreign relations. During the course of that conflict, all of the basic assumptions underlying the American role in, and conduct of, global affairs have been sharply questioned. In contrast to the optimism demonstrated by North Vietnam, the US reflects a sense of failure and uncertainty. There is no longer a basic consensus as to what this nation should be in the international community, beyond widespread agreement that another intervention such as took place in South Vietnam is to be avoided at all costs. It is unlikely that either the public or the Congress would support any resumption of US military operations in South Vietnam under any foreseeable circumstances.

The relative interest retained by the United States in the outcome of the Indo-China question is also markedly different from that of the DRV. Although the continuation of the *status*

quo in South Vietnam would be acceptable, and an independently strong South Vietnam would be preferred, the final settlement of the Indo-China dispute is no longer a primary interest of the US. Our primary interests, rather, appear at present to be in the developing major-Power relationships in the context of an increasingly multipolar world. Given the choice between re-intervention South Vietnam at the cost of those major-Power relationships, and maintaining the relationships at the cost of a South Vietnamese military defeat, it is apparent that the latter course of action would now be followed. Indo-China is at best no more than a secondary interest for the US, and then only insofar as it reflects on the credibility of the Nixon Doctrine. Even there, the case could be made that the Doctrine did not really apply to Indo-China, since that had come increasingly under UN auspices (however inefficiently it has handled matters there). Essentially, US interests have moved elsewhere, and no reappearance of the American pre-occupation with Indo-China which was apparent in the early 1960s is likely.

Finally, for the United States, the question with regard to our Indo-China policies is not whether it **can** influence the outcome there. It is really whether or not we **should** do so, given our decreased interest in that region and the appearance of a number of other problems requiring our attention. The focus on **detente** with China and the Soviet Union, the uncertainty of our economic situation, the necessity of re-orienting US relations with our allies and trading partners, and the strong base of domestic opposition to another limited war severely restrict the selection of American policy options. Whereas North Vietnam has acquired something close to *carte blanche* in its selection of policy options, the US is in the distinctly uncomfortable position of trying to satisfy some minimum interests at little or no cost to itself. In some circumstances, this might be possible; in the present situation, it is more a case of trying to minimize one's losses in an unmanageable affair. For the US, the following rank-ordering of its policy opfions applies:

(1) Option 1: Continue *status quo*
(2) **Option 4: Withdraw**
(3) **Option 2: Indirect military support.**
(4) **Option 3: Direct military intervention**

In contrast to North Vietnam's position, the US does not have the flexibility to alternate among options along a fairly clear continuum. Instead, there is a sharp division between the first two preferred options on the one hand, and the last two options on the other. Given the existing domestic political climate and the international *milieu,* debate in the US basically focuses on a choice between options 1 (continue as at present) and 4 (withdraw). The two military options are not really viable. That is, the US only has a choice of whether or not to further de-escalate its involvement; escalation is not feasible.

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DEPENDING on the respective policy options selected by the United States and North Vietnam, final settlement of the Indo-China question may take one of five forms. These are: the neutralization of South Vietnam, and possibly Laos and Cambodia, with the retention of the present national boundaries; the continuation of the *status quo* in Indo-China, but without the neutralization of that area; the domination of Laos and/or Cambodia by the DRV or other Communist forces, but not South Vietnam; the reoccupation of Communist-controlled parts of South Vietnam by a strengthened Saigon Government; and the domination of all of Indo-China by Communist forces, either directly or indirectly associated with North Vietnam. Which combination of policy initiatives and responses by the US and the DRV would produce a given outcome cannot be precisely determined. It is obvious, however, that the stronger the North Vietnamese initiative and the weaker the US response, the greater the probability that all of Indo-China will be dominated by Hanoi.

Whichever outcome obtains, however, is likely to have a significant effect on the viability of the Nixon Doctrine as a guideline for US foreign policy. The character of the final political settlement in Indo-China is clearly of major importance for that Doctrine, as Indo-China is unquestionably a test case for it. The continuation of the *status quo* would essentially postpone the resolution of that test, while permitting the US to gain additional time to recover its diplomatic and military credibility (both of which suffered in the course of the Indo-China fighting). It is therefore an acceptable outcome, if not a preferred one. The neutralization of South Vietnam (or of all of Indo-China, for that matter) is a final settlement which the US would prefer to a continuation of the present situation.

It would also help legitimize both the original American intervention in South Vietnam and the present policy followed under the Nixon Doctrine. A strengthened South Vietnam, with or without a Communist-dominated Laos and Cambodia, would have a similar, but much stronger effect. It would also enhance the credibility of other American security commitments to Asian allies. In contrast to this, however, the domination of Indo-China by North Vietnam would severely affect the credibility of that Doctrine. It would also reflect adversely on the utility of American alliance commitments. Not only would it highlight the failure of the American effort to retain a pro-Western government in Saigon. It would also give other States good reason to reconsider their ties with the US and to seek other accommodations with China or the USSR (or both). It is the outcome least desired by the US, but preferred by North Vietnam.

Even recognizing these factors, however, it is apparent that the US has relatively little ability to control the shape of the final settlement in Indo-China. This country cannot control the decisions of the DRV's leadership, and there is no reason to assume that either China or the USSR could do better, even if they chose to attempt it. A military threat from North Vietnam against Saigon could only be countered effectively by a comparable response from the US. That response is not likely to be forthcoming. The US should certainly attempt to provide South Vietnam with the economic assistance it requires to rebuild itself as quickly as possible, since it is to the advantage of the United States and its Asian allies to have a strong pro-Western government in Saigon. Yet if there should be a renewal of major fighting, such as a full-scale assault, South Vietnam will probably be compelled to defend itself as best it can without American military intervention on its behalf. In such circumstances, the outcome of the fighting would be highly problematical. If South Vietnam holds, then the long-range prospects for its survival are relatively good. Yet if that does not happen, then the US will probably be forced to terminate its commitment and complete its disengagement from Indo-China. This may not be a preferred response, given the extensive investment made by the US in South Vietnam's survival. Yet at this point it may be the only viable course of action. It has been observed that the continuation of the *status quo* is apparently acceptable to the US. In reality, it is also the best outcome that we are likely to have in Indo-China.

Notes and References

1. The term was coined more than a decade ago by Bernard Fall in *Street Without Joy* (3rd ed; Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Press, 1963).

2. There is no comparable ceasefire agreement for Cambodia. The level of fighting there, however, is clearly linked to events in Laos and Vietnam.

3. North Vietnam (DRV) does not admit to having armed forces outside its own territory, although Western intelligence sources currently put the number of DRV soldiers in other Indo-Chinese States at more than 300,000. In this paper, "Communist forces" refers to DRV units combined with Pathet Lao, Khmer Rouge, and Provisional Revolutionary Goverment (PRG) forces indigenous to Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, respectively.

4. See, for example, Allan E. Goodman, "On Making the Vietnam Agreements Work," *South-East Asian SPECTRUM,* vol. II no. 3 (April 1974), pp. 39-41.

5. See the discussion in Robert Strausz-Hupé *et al., Protracted Conflict* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963 ed.).

6. *Editorial note:* This article was written before the serious deterioration of the situation in South Vietnam and especially Cambodia, which occurred during January 1975.

7. *Editorial note:* With the fall of the provincial capital of Phuoc Binh to Communist forces on 7 January 1975, the whole of the province of Phuoc Long, less than 100 miles North of Saigon, came under Communist control.

8. See Vo Truong Son, "Vietnam a year after the Spring/Summer offensive," *South-East Asian SPECTRUM,* vol. II no. 1 (October 1973), p. 26.

9. A "key actor" is a State whose actions (or reactions) helps define the major axes of conflict and co-operation in a given area. A "key actor" need not be a major Power. For relevant discussions, see David O. Wilkinson, *Comparative Foreign Relations: Framework and Methods,* Ch. 1 (Belmont, Calif: Dickenson, 1969); and Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics,* Chs. 2-3 (New York: Wiley, 1957).

10. Some States, such as Japan, are developing considerable economic interests in the region. But there is no reason for them to assume that they would be less able to deal with a Communist-controlled Indo-China than they are with China or the Soviet Union. Also, such States lack the capability to make significant military intervention a feasible option, whatever their preferences might be.

11. For example, a North Vietnamese military initiative (by having forces in or near the disputed area) would not give the DRV this freedom of action, if the US had the psychological initiative (a belief that we can and should do anything to support any ally against a Communist State, and do so successfully) and the diplomatic initiative (a conscious policy of intervention on behalf of our allies). In other words, the present situation in Indo-China represents a shift in overall policy initiative from the US (as in the early 1960s) to North Vietnam.

12. Some writers have argued that the US may have achieved a limited set of objectives in that war, and that the region is relatively stronger now than it was a decade earlier. See Earl C. Ravenal, "Was Vietnam a 'Mistake'?" *Asian Survey,* vol XIV (July 1974), p. 605; Sol W. Sander, "Doctor Kissinger's Asia: Balance or Vertigo?" *Asian Affairs: An American Review,* no. 1 (September/October 1973), pp. 5-6; and George G. Thomson, "South-East Asia After the Cease-Fire," *Asian Affairs: An American Review,* no. 2 (November/December 1973), p. 105. This interpretation may well hold insofar as Asia in general or even South-East Asia are concerned. But it does not necessarily follow that the US retains the initiative in a subsequent conflict in Indo-China. That is an entirely different matter.

13. The specific policy options are discussed in detail in the following section.

14. See the discussion in F.P. Serong, "Vietnam Present and Prospective," *Asian Affairs: An American Review,* no. 1 (September/October 1973), pp. 26-29.

15. This need not be a vote for unification under Hanoi. The advocacy of a neutral posture, or a preference for non-unification, could also have this effect.

INSURGENCY: *"The three rural insurgencies in Thailand and the efforts by the Thai Government to deal with them provide a rich laboratory to analyse and compare many factors involved in organized dissident movements against established national governments."*

Rural insurgencies in Thailand- a comparative analysis

Frank C. Darling

SINCE the end of the Second World War and the termination of Western colonial rule in South-East Asia, all nations in the region have experienced internal rural insurgencies. These domestic rebellions have been caused by numerous and diverse factors. They have varied widely in scope, intensity, and duration. Most South-East Asian nations have experienced at least one rural insurgency; for many years Thailand has experienced three.

This situation appears somewhat anomalous since Thailand was the only nation in South-East Asia to avoid Western colonial rule and it entered the post-Second World War era with fewer social and political schisms than its neighbours. Yet the Thai kingdom has occupied a unique geopolitical position in regional politics. It has been deeply involved in the efforts of the Western power bloc to contain the spread of Communist rule in South-East Asia (1). Significant political and military conflicts have occurred near its national borders. Some internal groups have been susceptible to political subversion and guerrilla warfare.

This article comprises a comparative analysis of the rural insurgencies in southern, northern, and north-eastern Thailand and the degree of foreign involvement in these domestic rebellions. It seeks to explain the combination of external and internal factors inducing the hostile actions of an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 insurgents operating in 37 of the 71 provinces of the kingdom (2).

My mode of analysis will focus on what I will call the *expansive potential* of the rural insurgency or the capability of organized insurgent groups to spread their political control over larger geographic territories. This capability, I suggest, is caused by one or both of two variables. Firstly there are *sub-national factors* comprising local, provincial, or particularistic grievances against the central government which are peculiar to a specific indigenous area. Sub-national factors induce characteristics in each rural insurgency which are distinctive and *sui generis*. Secondly there are *supra-national factors* consisting of general, trans-national, or universalistic influences in the form of ideological guidance and/or material support abetting organized insurgency. Since the achievement of national independence in South-East Asia, the supra-national factors involved in most rural insurgencies in the region have been the Communist doctrine and external logistical support from Communist nations (3). This article will analyse the role of these two variables in rural insurgencies in Thailand in the order of their expansive potential, beginning with the least expansive. It will conclude by positing several hypotheses derived from the analysis of the three rural insurgencies and offering some proposals

relevant to a possible "science" of counter-insurgency warfare.

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THE rural insurgency in the southern border provinces of Yala, Pattani, Satun, and Narathiwat is the most complex insurgency in the kingdom since it comprises several separate and diverse dissident organizations. Sub-national factors which induce the expansive potential of the most significant rural insurgency in this area are racial and religious. They consist of the grievances of the Thai-Muslim community (at present numbering about 700,000 people) which has lived under Thai political rule for almost seven centuries (4). Thai-Muslim hostility toward the central government and the dominant Thai-Buddhist society is induced by deep-seated differences of religious values, language and culture. Bitterness is reinforced by lower economic, social, and educational conditions in the Thai-Muslim community than elsewhere in the southern provinces. Thai-Muslims occupy few posts in the civil service, and their inability to master the Thai language has restricted admission to institutions of higher education. Secessionist sentiments have been voiced by Thai-Muslim leaders since the early nineteenth century and intermittent revolts have been staged against Thai political rule. Local uprisings occurred frequently after the negotiation of the international boundary between Thailand and British Malaya in 1909.

Since the independence of Malaya in 1957, a vocal faction of this regional minority has continuously sought to secede from Thailand and join the Malaysian Federation. Animosity toward the Thai Government erupted into violence in 1968 when a Thai-Muslim separatist organization began attacking Thai Government installations and personnel (5). This dissident movement estimated at about 600 men has since called itself "The National Liberation Army of Pattani Republic" **(Tentara Nasional Pembebasan Rak' yat Pattani)** (6). The expansive potential of this Thai-Muslim separatist organization is aided by financial support from criminal groups in the southern border provinces and leftist elements in Malaysia. It has received no known assistance from the Government of Malaysia or any other foreign Islamic source.

Both sub-national and supra-national factors are involved in the expansive potential of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) conducting guerrilla warfare operations along the Thai-Malaysian border. This insurgent organization is politically motivated by the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist doctrine. It consists of approximately 2,000 to 3,000 rebels who are the remnants of the guerrilla organization formed during the Japanese occupation in Malaya which waged a bitter para-military struggle against the British colonial Government from 1948 until the mid-1950s (7). It derives most of its financial support from extortion of wealthy Chinese merchants in Malaysia, and it uses remote jungle areas on the Thai-Malaysian border as staging bases and rest camps for its armed attacks against Malaysian Government installations and personnel. The Chinese Communist insurgents in southern Thailand have attained little success in exploiting anti-Thai grievances among the Thai-Muslim community. Malay racial animosity toward the Chinese combined with Islamic religious opposition to the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology have precluded widespread co-operation between the Chinese Communists and the Thai-Muslim separatist movement (8).

Supra-national factors alone have motivated the newest insurgent organization consisting of an estimated 400 Thai Communist rebels operating in the mid-southern provinces of Trang, Phattalung, Surat Thani, and Nakhorn Si Thammarat. Since 1971 these small bands of insurgents have displayed considerable organizational skill and military prowess in staging devastating attacks against Thai army and police installations (9). Although there is little information about this new terrorist group, it appears to be motivated only by the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology and receives no known foreign assistance.

Throughout the 1970s the rural insurgencies in the southern provinces, especially the Thai-Muslim separatist movement, have been the most active and attracted the most public attention. Their terrorist tactics have forced the closure of numerous rubber plantations causing a steady decline in the economy of the entire region. Yet the insurgents in the South have the least expansive potential of the three rural insurgencies in Thailand. They are a nuisance to the Thai Government and society rather than a major threat. The leadership of each dissident organi-

zation confronts enormous obstacles in seeking to spread guerrilla warfare operations into larger geographic areas. The Thai-Muslim separatists and the MCP derive their primary support from a non-Thai political base and each insurgent organization receives modest or no foreign assistance. The Thai-Muslim separatist movement has a limited appeal even among its own community in southern Thailand, and only 3 per cent of this regional minority has supported its violent tactics. Its basic goal is not to expand control over larger territories in Thailand, but to gain the secession of the four southern provinces to the Federation of Malaysia. This objective has received no sympathy from government leaders in Kuala Lumpur who are continually seeking to maintain friendly diplomatic relations with Thailand.

The revolutionary objective of the Chinese Communist insurgents in the South is likewise directed against the Malaysian rather than the Thai Government. The para-military operations of the MCP are confined largely to the Thai-Malaysian border where their primary effort is to preserve secure sanctuaries for guerrilla warfare operations on Malaysian territory. The Chinese Communist insurgents engage in military skirmishes with Thai security forces only when their staging bases and training camps are threatened. The recent emergence of Thai Communist insurgents in the central Kra peninsula is the only element of the rural insurgencies in southern Thailand which has a threatening expansive potential. This dissident group is of the same racial and linguistic stock as the dominant Thai society and under certain conditions it could conceivably augment its territorial control. Yet this small insurgent organization has been ineffective in promoting its political doctrine among local villagers, and it has relied entirely on military and terrorist tactics in waging its conflict against the central government. Unless the economic and social conditions in this relatively prosperous area deteriorate drastically, it will continue to have a limited expansive potential.

In coping with the rural insurgencies in the southern provinces, the Thai Government has used both "carrot" and "stick" tactics. Suppressive measures have consisted of search and destroy operations, stopping gun-running, and an effort to separate the insurgents from the local populace. Some progress against the dissident organizations has been achieved by co-operative measures between the Thai and Malaysian Governments, including a joint intelligence service, a joint surrender programme, and joint border patrols (10). The Bangkok authorities have made a significant effort to obtain a larger foreign market for rubber and tin exports on which the bulk of the regional economy depends. In 1970 the Accelerated Rural Development (ARD) programme which proved effective in the impoverished north-eastern provinces was extended to the South (11). This programme has consisted of groups of trained technical workers (Mobile Development Units) constructing small-scale projects such as feeder-roads, wells, and market stalls in outlying villages. These local assistance projects have also served the political purpose of reducing the sense of isolation many rural villagers have felt toward the central government. Bangkok authorities have likewise made special efforts to promote more amicable relations between Thai provincial administrators and the Thai-Muslim minority. Moderate leaders of this communal group have been honoured by Thai governors in the border provinces and by the Thai royal family in Bangkok (12). The central government has constructed several mosques and a regional university in the South. Educational opportunities are gradually being expanded and an effort is being made to recruit larger numbers of Thai-Muslims into the civil service (13).

Unlike counter-insurgent actions in the northern and north-eastern provinces, the Thai Government has received little foreign assistance in dealing with the rural insurgencies in the South. Considerable United States military equipment has been employed in suppressive operations against the insurgents, and the American military aid programme has established small police installations in isolated areas. Yet no American military advisers are attached to Thai Army or police units in the South. Economic, military, and propaganda counter-measures are administered by Thai authorities.

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TRIBALISM comprises the dominant sub-national factor causing the rural insurgency in the northern provinces of the kingdom. Approximately 20 tribal groups numbering about 500,000 people inhabit this mountainous terrain surrounded by Burma and Laos. The

largest hill tribes in this region include the Meo, Yao, Karen, Lahu, Lisu, and Akha (14). Each of these tribes has its own language and customs. Most tribes have migrated to Thailand from southern China during the past century, while a few have moved from turbulent areas in Burma and Laos during the past twenty years (15). Tribal grievances against the central government which induce the expansive potential of this rural insurgency are caused by official restrictions on traditional economic activities, including opium-growing, smuggling, and swidden (slash and burn) agriculture. In contrast to the rural populace in southern Thailand, the northern hill tribes are opposed to economic modernization. Their animosity toward the Thai Government is exacerbated by a strong independent spirit which resists economic and social incentives provided by Thai authorities to resettle among the lowland rice-growing society. Anti-Thai hostility has been intensified during the past several years by increasing contacts between southward migrating hill tribes and westward migrating Thai villagers, from the impoverished north-eastern provinces.

The supra-national factor of the rural insurgency in the northern provinces has consisted of subversive activities by Communist agents infiltrating from Communist China, North Vietnam, and Laos. In this region the expansive potential of the rural insurgency is provided by a combination of ideological and logistical support provided by external activists. For several years Communist infiltrators in the North comprised an estimated 400 Thai, Thai—Chinese, and Pathet Lao agents trained by Chinese Communists at a special training base at Hoa Binh near Hanoi (16). Since 1971 agents and military supplies from China have entered Thailand along a road built by the Chinese into northern Laos (17). These foreign-trained agents have succeeded in providing weapons and guerrilla warfare training to an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 Meo tribesmen.

The flow of political activists and weapons to the rural insurgency in the northern provinces from southern China has made it the most extensively foreign-supported insurgency in Thailand. Its expansive potential constitutes the second most serious threat among the dissident movements in the kingdom. The northern insurgents possess the capacity to operate over a larger territory than insurgents in the South, and they can threaten the security of larger numbers of people. They can likewise inflict heavier casualties against government security forces seeking to suppress their guerrilla warfare operations. They have attacked government outposts in Chiang Rai Province adjacent to Burma and terrorized villagers in the "tri-border" provinces of Phitsanulok, Phetchabun, and Loei adjoining Laos. In 1970 they murdered the Governor of Chieng Rai Province and two army colonels who were attempting unarmed to negotiate the surrender of a local terrorist group (18). By 1973 the insurgents had made it impossible for Thai security forces in the North to enter "special insurgency zones" except in large, heavily-armed units (19).

Yet the rural insurgency in the northern provinces has limited expansive potential. As in the South, it is a nuisance to the Thai Government, not a major threat. It can harass Thai security forces but it does not possess the capacity to expand its control over larger territories. The insurgent movement in the North is built on a relatively small and highly fragmented non-Thai political base. The only tribal group which has participated in the insurgency on a sizeable scale are the Meo who number between 50,000 - 70,000 people. Other hill tribes, comprising more than 90 per cent of the tribal population, have major grievances against the Thai Government but, with few exceptions, they have not resorted to violence. Meo insurgents in the North have displayed remarkable skill and fervour in waging small-scale attacks against Thai security forces, but they are untrained for sustained and sophisticated military operations in lowland areas. Meo tribal values are antithetical to long-range organization and discipline, and the primary social norm of this tribal group is to maintain isolation and independence from any governmental authority (20). In effect, the expansive potential of the rural insurgency in the northern provinces is limited to the rugged mountainous terrain inhabited by the hill tribes.

Suppressive measures against the northern insurgents by the central government have achieved meager results. Intensive air attacks against suspect Meo villagers have caused little damage to the dissident movement and merely contributed to increased hostility toward the dominant Thai society. The largest military offensive in the history of the kingdom was launched in March 1972 against insurgents in

the "tri-border" provinces, but it yielded only a few captured sympathizers (21). An "open arms" programme has been attempted in areas where terrorists have not established a firm control, and government officials can enter unarmed to make direct personal appeals to uncommitted tribal villages (22). The economic policy of the Thai Government to reduce the grievances of the hill tribes has been designed to deal with the unique environmental conditions in the northern provinces. The primary effort to improve living standards among the hill tribes has consisted of a resettlement programme providing improved economic and social conditions in government-cleared sectors. The central government has offered free land to tribal people entering these special areas as well as housing, health facilities and education.

Unlike the rural insurgency in the South, the Thai Government has received considerable foreign assistance in coping with the northern insurgency. The United States has supplied much direct military support. American military equipment has been provided through the United States military aid programme, and American military advisers have been attached to the Thai Third Army deployed in the northern provinces. American military advisers provide specialized counter-insurgency training at a Thai military base in Phitsanulok, although American military personnel are forbidden from accompanying Thai troops into combat zones (23). Thailand's Hill Tribes Research Centre in Chiang Mai was set up in 1965 with the co-operation of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization for the purpose of studying the needs of the northern tribal communities (24). Under SEATO auspices, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and the United States have contributed professional anthropologists and specialized equipment for this research programme. A US$3,000,000 pilot project has been sponsored by the United Nations to replace opium growing among the hill tribes with technical assistance in the production of food and cash crops. New Zealand has constructed the first of a series of small irrigation dams to alleviate a water shortage among Meo and Yao tribal communities in Nan province (25).

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THE sub-national factors promoting the rural insurgency in the north-eastern provinces are historical, cultural and economic. The populace in this area consists of Thai-Lao people of the same racial, religious and linguistic stock as the dominant Thai population. These inhabitants constitute a segment of the Lao people who migrated from southern China during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries at the same time the Thai people settled at their first capital in northern Thailand (26). Until the early nineteenth century most Lao people lived under their own rulers, while large numbers were forcibly moved after 1828 to their present location when the Laotian kingdom was conquered by Thai invaders and governed as a vassal state. Today the Thai-Lao in Thailand live in seventeen provinces comprising one-third of the territory of the kingdom; they number approximately 12,000,000 people which is one-third of the total population (27).

A separatist tradition has existed among the Thai-Lao people of the North-east since their early settlement in the Thai kingdom. A rugged mountainous terrain bordering the north-eastern provinces has hampered contacts between Bangkok and this large sub-national minority throughout most of Thai history. Until recently the only direct means of communication into the region was a single railroad constructed in the 1890s. More frequent contact did not occur until the completion of an American-built highway in 1958. Detachment and neglect from the mainstream of Thai society have induced a sense of resentment and inferiority. A strong regional identity has generated an intense personal loyalty to local leaders. According to Professor David Wilson:

> "A tradition in the North-east of resistance to central Thai influence is long and strong, and local political leaders have sustained their positions by dissent from Bangkok's bidding. The people of the area have become deeply attached to their leaders in an emotional, almost religious, fashion, which reflects an important contrast between this part of Thailand and the rest." (28)

North-eastern regional identity was strengthened during World War II when the Free Thai movement waged guerrilla warfare in the area against the Japanese and the Phibun Songkhram government in Bangkok. Hostility toward military rulers in the central government was exacerbated by the assassination of several members of parliament from the North-east in 1949 and 1952. Thai-Lao spokesmen have never clarified their

separatist objectives and, unlike the Thai-Muslim separatists in the South, they have not advocated the secession of the north-eastern provinces for the purpose of joining an adjacent independent nation. Political leaders in the North-east are aware that Laos is a much less developed country than Thailand, and they know its meager resources and vulnerable geopolitical location are unfavourable for rapid economic growth. Their primary goal has consequently been the pursuit of some form of local autonomy and more developmental assistance from the central Thai Government.

The most significant source of grievances in the North-east is the widespread economic deprivation in the area. The semi-arid soil produces only one rice crop a year with yields much below the average production of other areas (29). The region has few mineral resources and meager prospects for industrial development. The population density is higher than the national average, and the annual population increase of 3.5 per cent makes it the most rapidly growing region in the country (30). Per capita income is less than one-half that of other regions.

The supra-national factor in the rural insurgency in the north-eastern provinces consists of subversive operations by Thai Communist activists exploiting the grievances of disgruntled Thai-Lao villagers. As in the northern insurgency, the supra-national factors and the sub-national factors in the North-east are closely interlinked. Thai-Lao insurgents have been trained in North Vietnam and active in the region since the mid-1950s (31). They operated in small groups until 1965 when they organized the "Thailand Patriotic Front" estimated at 1,500 terrorists and 50,000 sympathizers (32). During the past few years their training centre has shifted to Communist-controlled territory in Laos and finally to the Phu Pan mountains in north-eastern Thailand (33). The rural insurgency in the North-east receives the bulk of its external aid from North Vietnam. This foreign assistance is much smaller than that provided to the insurgents in the northern provinces by Communist China since the distance is greater and the weapons must travel through areas of Laos nominally controlled by the Royal Laotian Army and cross the Mekong River which is carefully patrolled by Thai river police. Inadequate external aid and strong suppressive measures by Thai security forces caused the insurgents in the north-eastern provinces after 1970 to reduce their guerrilla warfare operations and direct their primary effort toward the establishment of a clandestine political organization.

The restrained militancy of the north-eastern insurgency has contrasted markedly with the more active rural insurgencies in the South and North. Yet the expansive potential of the insurgent movement in the North-east is the largest of the three rural insurgencies in Thailand. Under favourable conditions the interaction of sub-national and supra-national factors in this region could increase insurgent control over a sizeable portion of the country's population and territory. Sub-national grievances in this rural insurgency have pitted Thai against Thai. Terrorist activities have assumed some inchoate characteristics of a civil conflict between people of the same race and culture. The expansive potential of the north-eastern insurgency is not limited by a non-Thai political base as in the southern and northern insurgencies. The consolidation of firm political control by insurgents over strategic portions of the North-east could facilitate more extensive dissident operations in the crucial densely populated provinces surrounding Bangkok.

The expansive potential of the north-eastern insurgency has special significance due to its geographic location adjacent to Laos where approximately two-thirds of the national territory has been controlled for many years by North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao military forces. The assumption of Communist rule over the entire Laotian territory would greatly enhance the opportunity to expand insurgent activity in north-eastern Thailand. In effect, Laos could become a large staging base for Lao Communist agents infiltrating a highly vulnerable region containing one-third of the population and territory of the Thai kingdom. The prevention of Communist rule in Laos and the removal of sub-national grievances in the North-east have consequently been major objectives of Thai Government policy.

Since the mid-1960s the Thai Government has implemented a special assistance programme to reduce economic and social grievances in the north-eastern provinces. This official effort has been administered by the ARD Department which has also administered aid projects in the southern and northern provinces. Yet the essential thrust

of the ARD programme has been directed at reducing the most serious insurgent threat in the North-east. The Mobile Development Units (MDU) engaged in small-scale ARD projects have concentrated on 14 provinces of the North-east, while they have been active in only four provinces in the South and four provinces in the North (34). These government technical teams have constructed water facilities, sanitary systems and land settlement schemes in many north-eastern villages. Government road construction has aided in opening new markets for villagers producing small cash crops. Compulsory education has been extended from four to seven years, and vocational schools have been established in provincial cities. A regional university has been erected at Khon Kaen for higher education in the North-east. These government efforts to promote economic and social progress in the region have met with some success and the provincial feeling of separatism appears to be declining. A sense of identification with the mainstream of Thai society has been promoted by modern education, mass media, and increasing physical mobility (35).

The efforts of the Thai Government to cope effectively with the north-eastern insurgency have been heavily supplemented with foreign aid. The United States has been the major donor in providing economic assistance and strengthening the Thai military forces in this strategic region. Since signing economic and military aid agreements with the Thai Government in 1950, the United States has expended approximately US $1,000,000,000 in bolstering the security and economy of the kingdom. Some US $588,075,000 of this aid has been devoted to military purposes, and US $400,000,000 has been spent on economic and technical development (36). Since the early 1960s the bulk of American aid has been directed toward improved security and economic conditions in the north-eastern provinces. American technical assistance has been primarily involved in the construction of basic infrastructure and training in technical skills. This extensive American aid programme combined with diplomatic prodding by the United States were important influences in the establishment of the ARD programme by the Thai Government in the mid-1960s. Increasing expenditures of funds and personnel by Thai policy-makers have further aided the economic development of the North-east and placed Thai officials in more direct contact with the problems of the under-privileged people in this vulnerable region.

The World Bank has been second to the United States in providing economic assistance to Thailand, much of it directed toward the development of the north-eastern provinces. Nineteen loans totalling US $312,000,000 have been made by the World Bank for the construction of railroads, highways, and power and irrigation projects in this region. Other specialized agencies of the United Nations have likewise administered important aid programmes in the North-east. SEATO has provided a variety of community development projects and technical training centres (37). Under the auspices of the Colombo Plan, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain have constructed numerous bridges and roads.

The foregoing description and analysis of the three rural insurgencies in Thailand suggest six hypotheses regarding the expansive potential of dissident movements caused by sub-national and supra-national factors. These hypotheses in turn indicate some aspects of a possible "science" of counter-insurgency which may provide useful guidance to established governments seeking more effective measures to deal with rural insurgencies.

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HYPOTHESIS I. *The expansive potential of a rural insurgency depends more on sub-national factors than on supra-national factors.* According to one observer of dissident movements in Thailand: "Insurgencies spring from local conditions." (38) The relative depth and breadth of racial, religious, tribal, historical, sub-cultural, and economic grievances constitute the primary "breeding ground" or predisposing conditions on which a rural insurgency is based. Supra-national factors serve largely as a catalyst or precipitating influence which convert these local grievances into open rebellion. Supra-national factors also influence the intensity and scope of a rural insurgency. Yet sub-national factors are the most salient since they are "on-going" manifestations of domestic conflicts and problems. Supra-national factors are less significant since sizeable elements of the indigenous populace eventually learn that the ideological guidance and material support of the insurgents is alien and foreign-supplied.

This hypothesis is verified in considerable degree by comparing the sub-national and supra-national factors involved in the rural insurgencies in Thailand. The expansive potential of the three "sub-insurgencies" in southern Thailand is directly related to the grievances exploited by each dissident movement against the central government, while external assistance exerts a negligible or non-existent role. The expansive potential is greatest for the Thai-Muslim separatist organization exploiting long-standing racial and religious discontent; it is less for the Malaysian Chinese Communists using the Thai-Malaysian border area to support guerrilla warfare operations against the Malaysian Government; it is the least for the few hundred Thai Communist terrorists operating in the relatively prosperous central Kra peninsula. Some foreign support is received by the Thai-Muslim separatists and the MCP, but it is a secondary factor in these southern insurgencies. The disgruntlement among Meo tribal groups in the northern provinces has likewise provided a sizeable base for guerrilla warfare activity, yet the expansive potential of this rural insurgency is limited much more by the primitive militant tribesmen and the highly fragmented tribal society than by the ideological and military support from Communist China. The most significant sub-national factor in the kingdom is the widespread sub-cultural alienation and economic deprivation in the north-eastern provinces which is much more important in promoting the rural insurgency in this area than the modest clandestine aid from North Vietnam.

This hypothesis suggests that an effective policy for an established government seeking to curtail a rural insurgency would be a top-priority economic and social action programme designed specifically to alleviate the local popular grievances which foster the insurgency. At the same time a lesser but significant priority should be given to effective suppressive measures against indigenous and foreign subversive agents. Since the mid-1960s the Thai government has implemented some aspects of this kind of policy. It has sought to reduce sub-national grievances in all three insurgent areas by relying more heavily on economic, educational and propaganda measures than on military and police action. This policy has reduced some local support for the three rural insurgencies, yet its major weakness has been the imbalance between considerations of domestic and foreign affairs in the top decision-making processes of the central government. Thai political leaders tend to be more concerned about policy shifts in Peking, economic excesses of Japan, military tactics of North Vietnam, and political support from the United States, than they are about important domestic problems. The Thai Government has sent many thousands of its troops to fight in South Korea and South Vietnam, but it has been reluctant to commit adequate military power to quell its own internal insurgencies. An astute foreign policy and extensive foreign involvement are obviously important in protecting Thai national interests, yet more attention and support are needed in ameliorating the sub-national factors abetting the three domestic insurgencies.

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HYPOTHESIS II. *The expansive potential of a rural insurgency is augmented greatly when sub-national factors consist of sub-cultural or economic grievances within the dominant population group; the expansive potential is reduced when sub-national factors consist of racial, religious, ethnic, or tribal grievances among minority groups.* This hypothesis provides the basic criteria for assessing the expansive potential of the north-eastern insurgency as the largest in the kingdom since it has the capacity to develop into a broader civil conflict within the dominant Thai-Buddhist population. The rural insurgencies in the southern and northern provinces are frequently more volatile and more dramatic than the dissident activity in the North-east, yet these insurgencies are waged by relatively small minority groups whose expansive potential is limited to their area of domicile.

This hypothesis indicates the need for central governments to give the highest priority to rural insurgencies based solely on sub-cultural and economic grievances, usually by implementing a policy of assimilation capable of reducing the sense of separation and exclusion and incorporating the alienated provincial group into the mainstream of the dominant society. An effective course of action in achieving this goal is an organized programme emphasizing similarities of race, religion, language, history and culture combined with suitable educational and economic improvements for the realization of a common national and cultural identity. Somewhat lower priority can be given to policies designed to reduce racial, religious, or tribal

grievances among minority groups since these grievances constitute a lesser threat and may never be completely resolved. A policy of assimilation is unrealistic in attempting to quell the grievances of most minority groups and extremely slow in ameliorating the grievances of others. Probably the best course of action with most minority groups is to seek some form of accomodation and reduce their grievances to the lowest possible level through selective economic and social programmes.

Until the mid-1960s the Thai Government often ignored the implications of this hypothesis. It frequently gave a high priority to widely publicized insurgent activities in the North and South, and it provided insufficient means to alleviate the grievances in the North-east. Since 1965 this policy has been modified and a more realistic order of priorities has emerged. The largest rural developmental programmes of the government are being directed toward the improvement of economic and social conditions in the north-eastern provinces.

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HYPOTHESIS III. *The expansive potential of a rural insurgency is a function of its capacity to inflict violence in territories inhabited by large populations, especially in major urban centres.* This hypothesis involves the adverse political and economic reactions caused by the expansion of insurgent activity to populous areas. When this development occurs the central government suffers a significant political setback among large numbers of people due to lowered public morale and shaken confidence in the ability of the ruling regime to provide the basic societal need of personal security. Political support for the central government in densely populated areas likewise declines when innocent people are inevitably harmed by military counter-measures against the insurgents. The central government also pays a high price for insurgent actions in large populous areas since it must devote more of its limited resources to military and police actions and fewer resources to urgently needed developmental programmes. In effect, major government efforts are deflected from economic and social programmes designed to reduce the specific grievances abetting the insurgency.

This hypothesis is an important criterion in ranking the expansive potential of the three rural insurgencies in Thailand. The threat of the southern insurgency is significantly reduced since its area of violence is located about 500 miles from the densely populated central region surrounding Bangkok. The northern insurgency is slightly closer to this large population centre, but it is approximately 300 miles away from the central plains. The expansive potential of the north-eastern insurgency is significantly augmented by this hypothesis since its violence occasionally reached an area less than 200 miles from the national capital.

The most effective government policy in dealing with the implications of this hypothesis is obviously to contain insurgent activity as far removed from large population areas as possible. An unfortunate aspect in implementing this policy is that it tends to give higher priority to military and police actions than to economic and social programmes. It also requires unpopular official counter-measures which increase social regimentation and restrict physical mobility. Yet in spite of the frustrations and conflicting costs, the Thai Government has generally succeeded in implementing a policy of this kind. It has contained insurgent activity to areas relatively distant from the central region surrounding Bangkok, although it has failed to make major inroads against insurgent organizations near important provincial cities such as Haadyai, Pattani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phitsanulok and Chiang Mai.

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HYPOTHESIS IV. *The expansive potential of a rural insurgency is a function of the physical terrain.* This hypothesis is implicit in much of the analysis presented in this study. It is concerned with the nature of the surrounding physical environment in providing concealment to the insurgents and in presenting natural obstacles to counter-insurgency measures by government security forces. In some degree this hypothesis tends to modify the ranking of the expansive potential of the three rural insurgencies in Thailand. The physical terrain in the northern provinces is the most favorable to the insurgents and most adverse for army and police forces. The rugged mountains and thick rain forests provide excellent concealment for insurgent activity and inhibit the construction of transportation and communication facilities which could assist the rapid movement of government

troops. The terrain in the southern insurgency is likewise more favorable to the insurgents than to the central government. Yet the narrow peninsular territory makes its coastal area easier to patrol by small naval vessels, while a relatively good railroad and highway system enhances the movement of army and police troops. The physical terrain in the north-eastern provinces is the least favorable for insurgent activity since it consists largely of a flat semi-arid plateau with sparse scrubby trees and plant life (39). The North-east consequently has much open territory which provides relatively few areas for concealed insurgent bases, and aids counter-insurgent measures by government security forces.

In coping with insurgent activity in diverse geographic terrain, a government must choose between a policy of containment, a policy of liquidation, or some combination of both policies. Containment is the only rational policy where an imposing physical terrain provides adequate concealment to the insurgents, and a high cost in human lives and official expenditures is required to eradicate the insurgent movement. In these areas the best policy is to cordon the insurgent area with adequate security forces and devote maximum resources to elevating economic and social standards in the more accessible territory of the country. A policy of liquidation is feasible only in areas where the physical terrain is relatively unfavorable to insurgent activity and intensive security measures have some possibility of permanently destroying the insurgent infrastructure. The Thai Government has pursued a policy of containment in coping with the southern and northern insurgencies (40). Army and police forces in both areas are seeking to confine the insurgents to specific remote locations. In contrast, the Bangkok authorities since 1971 have attempted a policy of liquidation in dealing with many insurgent areas in the North-east. After some success with this policy, the central government faces a major challenge in winning the loyalty of the people in the north-eastern provinces as the insurgents have realized the limitations of guerrilla warfare and changed their tactics to the formation of a widespread clandestine organization (41).

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HYPOTHESIS V. *The expansive potential of a rural insurgency is a function of time.* A rural insurgency quickly acquires a sense of mission and degree of momentum, which becomes increasingly difficult to quell with the passage of time. The achievement of a few "victories" over government security forces tends to reinforce a spirit of hope and confidence in waging the struggle against the central government. The suffering caused by a few "defeats" provide local martyrs, exacerbate sub-national grievances, and intensify provincial hostility toward the central government. With each passing month or year, the very existence of an insurgent movement tends to acquire new meaning and vigor. Its leadership usually gains a higher degree of efficiency, a deeper dedication, and a more powerful vested interest in pushing the goals of the movement.

This hypothesis is verified in large degree by assessing the expansive potential of most of the rural insurgencies in Thailand. Overt dissident acts by the Thai-Lao populace against the central government have occurred intermittently in the North-east since the early nineteenth century, while more widespread insurgent operations in the area have taken place since the Japanese occupation in World War II. This localized hostility is the oldest in the kingdom; it intensifies the grievances induced by other sub-national factors in the north-eastern provinces. Another "time-honored" rural conflict consists of the Thai-Muslim separatist sentiment in the South, dating largely from the negotiation of the Thai-Malaysian border in 1909, and which has gained some additional impetus since the independence of Malaysia in 1957. Other rural insurgencies are fairly recent and derive relatively less strength from the passage of time. The Malaysian Chinese Communists have been active in the southern border provinces since the late 1950s; militant Meo tribesmen in the North have engaged in guerrilla warfare since the mid-1960s; and Thai Communist insurgents in the central southern provinces have waged terrorist actions since 1971.

The most effective government policy in dealing with the implications of this hypothesis is obviously to prevent the outbreak and establishment of a rural insurgency anywhere in the national territory. A determined official effort should be made "to nip" any dissident movement "in the bud." If this effort is not fully successful, the central government should endeavor to confine the insurgency to the smallest possible area. In either case, prompt economic and sup-

pressive measures should be undertaken to remove the sub-national and supra-national factors aiding the expansive potential of a rural insurgency in its early stages.The consequences for the central government and the national society in allowing a dissident movement to get firmly established are extremely severe.

The Thai Government has failed to prevent the outbreak of numerous rural insurgencies within its national borders. Over a period of many years it has still not alleviated the sub-national and supra-national factors causing the dissident movements in the South, North, and North-east. Yet the Bangkok authorities have learned to move more quickly in preventing the spread of rural insurgents, especially in the north-eastern provinces. They have also achieved better administrative co-ordination in quelling a new outbreak of terrorist activity as shown in the effective counter-insurgency measures against the Thai Communist insurgents in the central Kra peninsula in 1972 (42).

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HYPOTHESIS VI. *The expansive potential of a rural insurgency is a function of the degree of foreign support to the insurgent movement and to the established government.* This hypothesis overlaps with some aspects of the supra-national factors involved in Hypothesis I. Its implications are most significant in the final outcome of a rural insurgency and the counter-measures by the central government against it. Foreign support both hinders and helps the two sides of an insurgent conflict. The insurgent organization loses much political support among the indigenous populace for relying on a foreign source for ideological guidance and military weapons, yet this external assistance is crucial in continuing and expanding the rural insurgency. The central government also loses some political support among the indigenous populace for accepting foreign assistance and increasing foreign involvement in internal affairs, yet this external source usually contributes to the skills and equipment required to contain or quell the rural insurgency.

In Thailand this hypothesis largely entails the ideological and material support from Communist China and North Vietnam to insurgents in the North and North-east versus countervailing military and economic assistance from the United States, Western Europe, Australia and the United Nations to the Thai Government. Hypothesis VI is well verified in the ranking of the expansive potential of the three rural insurgencies in the kingdom. Modest support has been supplied to the insurgents in the north-eastern provinces by North Vietnam, assessed in this study as the rural insurgency with the largest expansive potential. Yet the extensive foreign assistance provided to the Thai Government for the purpose of dealing with this rural insurgency has been a major factor restricting the threat from this Hanoi-supported dissident movement. Considerable foreign support from Communist China has been involved in the northern insurgency, assessed as the insurgency with the second most expansive potential in the kingdom. Limited American military aid to Thai security forces in the North has assisted in reducing the gravity of this foreign-supported insurgency. Little or no foreign assistance has been provided to the insurgents or to Thai security forces in the southern provinces, assessed here as the rural insurgency with the least expansive potential.

The most effective government policy in coping with foreign-supported insurgencies is a domestic policy oriented toward the removal of sub-national grievances and a foreign policy seeking the termination of external assistance to indigenous insurgents. This foreign policy usually includes an effort to acquire adequate foreign military aid for indigenous military and police forces and internal economic development. These policies involve a choice between close alignment with a friendly major power capable of supplying sufficient economic and military aid, or remaining non-aligned in international politics while seeking economic and military assistance from "both sides." The first policy choice entails the advantage of receiving steady support from a committed "ally," but it has the disadvantage of arousing the hostility of opposing major powers who may use this alignment as a justification for augmented support to indigenous insurgents. The second policy choice involves the advantage of mitigating hostility from either power bloc, but it has the disadvantage of acquiring relatively small quantities of foreign economic and military assistance from both sides which contributes little in deterring insurgent activity.

Since 1950 Thailand has selected the first policy choice by relying heavily on American

economic and military aid as the most effective means of defending the kingdom from internal (and external) threats (43). The country has also received sizeable support from other western nations. This foreign assistance has been a major factor in promoting the economic development of the entire kingdom, and it has been instrumental in checking the rural insurgencies, especially in the North and North-east.

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IN final analysis, the interaction of numerous sub-national and supra-national factors affect the expansive potential of rural insurgencies. No single factor is determinate. Some factors abet insurgent activity; other countervailing factors inhibit it. Concrete government actions against insurgent movements likewise confront a variety of conflicting and competing forces.

This complex admixture of causal relationships has been analysed in this study comparing the expansive potential of the three rural insurgencies in Thailand. The expansive potential of the north-eastern insurgency has been appraised as the largest in the kingdom because of its "time-honoured" and widespread sub-national grievances, its relative proximity to the populous central region surrounding Bangkok, and the application of some North Vietnamese support. The conditions which inhibit this rural insurgency are the unfavorable terrain for guerrilla warfare and the extensive military and economic counter-actions undertaken by the Thai government, the United States and other foreign allies. The expansive potential of the insurgency in the northern provinces has been assessed as second in intensity because of sub-national grievances, the favorable terrain for insurgent activity, and considerable Chinese assistance. This dissident movement is limited by its fragmented tribal base, the long distance from the populous central region, its relatively brief duration, and partially effective official countermeasures aided modestly by American military assistance. The expansive potential of the southern insurgency has been judged the least ominous since it has a limited political base and only a moderately favorable terrain for insurgent activity. The southern insurgency is also inhibited by its lengthy distance from the heavily populated central region and the absence of foreign support.

On the basis of the analysis presented in this study, it is possible to predict that with the exception of a single contingency none of the rural insurgencies in Thailand possess sufficient expansive potential capable of subverting the security of the kingdom. The only contingency creating such a threat would be the assumption of Communist control over the entire territory in Laos. As cited earlier, this development would place a hostile totalitarian regime over approximately 2,000,000 Laotian people with similar racial, linguistic, and cultural characteristics as the 12,000,000 Thai-Lao people inhabiting the adjacent north-eastern provinces in Thailand. This condition would give a Communist government in Vientiane the low-cost option of fomenting widespread insurgency in this vulnerable region of the Thai kingdom. Additional support from Communist China and/or North Vietnam could enable a Laotian Communist regime to foster serious dissidence and violence among one-third of the total Thai population.

The development of this contingency is largely beyond Thai control. It would occur only through a possible shift in United States foreign policy involving a large-scale reduction of the American presence throughout South-East Asia and a significant curtailment of American military and economic aid to Thailand. The prevention of such adverse consequences for Thailand was a key factor in the efforts of the United States to terminate its direct participation in the Vietnam conflict with conditions minimizing the risks of future military conflicts in the region capable of escalating to the point where they might again involve the major powers. The United States sought numerous agreements to prevent these risks in its negotiations with North Vietnam and its military suppliers, the Soviet Union and Communist China. Many of these conditions were included in the peace agreement for Vietnam and in unwritten "understandings" with the political leadership in Moscow and Peking (44). The establishment of these conditions will depend on the degree of co-operation in upholding the terms of the Vietnam peace agreement by all parties (45).

As a precarious peace settlement is implemented in much of Indo-China, the Thai Government could use this new international development to great advantage by devoting increasing efforts to the improvement of many internal conditions. It could use the protection still

offered by American military power and the economic assistance from many friendly nations to promote a stronger and more unified society enjoying broad-based economic and social advancements. It could rededicate itself to the efforts of establishing a form of constitutional government suitable to the needs and political culture of the Thai people. Hopefully this effort will be significantly advanced in the general elections scheduled for January 1975 (46). In unison with a reasonably effective foreign policy, the Thai leaders may be able to reduce existing subnational grievances which might be exploited in future attempts at renewed insurgent activity.

Notes and References

1. See Russell H. Fifield, *The Diplomacy of South-East Asia: 1945-1958* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), Chap. 9; David J. Steinburg (ed.), *In Search of South-East Asia* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), Chaps. 34-5.

2. Personal Briefing, Headquarters, Communist Suppression Operation Command, Bangkok, Thailand, 28 April 1972. See also Maynard Parker, "Untying Thailand," *Foreign Affairs* (January 1973), pp. 327-39; Justus M. van der Kroef, "Guerrilla Communism and Counter-insurgency in Thailand," *Orbis* (Spring 1974), pp. 106-39.

3. The only other supra-national factor involved in rural insurgencies in South-East Asia has been a form of militant pan-nationalism promoted by Sukarno in Indonesia from 1963 to 1965 in his "confrontation" policy against Malaysia.

4. See Astri Suhrke, "The Thai Muslims: Some Aspects of Minority Integration," *Pacific Affairs* (Winter 1970-71), pp. 531-47.

5. *Bangkok World*, 22 November 1970.

6. *Bangkok World*, 24 April 1973.

7. See J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya A.D. 1400-1959* (Kuala Lumpur: Macmillan and Co Ltd 1964), pp. 255-91.

8. A few observers of the insurgency in southern Thailand claim that ideological and religious differences do not hamper co-operation between the Malaysian Chinese Communists and the Thai-Muslim separatists. See Suhrke, *op. cit.*, p. 541. Yet most analysts of insurgent activities in the southern provinces tend to adhere to the view that there is little genuine sympathy or co-operation between the MCP and the Thai-Muslim separatists. See Morell, *Asian Survey* (1972), p. 160; *Bangkok World*, 19 June 1974.

9. Morell, *Asian Survey* (1973), p. 171.

10. David A. Wilson, *The United States and the Future of Thailand* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 86.

11. *Bangkok World*, 13 November 1970.

12. *Bangkok World*, 5 November 1971.

13. Suhrke, *op. cit.*, pp. 542-7.

14. Frank C. Darling, Thailand: *New Challenges and the Struggle for a Political and Economic "Take-Off,"* American-Asian Educational Exchange, Inc., New York, 1969, pp. 20-1.

15. J. L. S. Girling, "Strong-Man Tactics in Thailand: The Problems Remain," *Pacific Community* (April 1972), p. 539.

16. Darling, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-9.

17. *Bangkok World*, 27 March 1973.

18. *Bangkok World*, 21 September 1970.

19. Morell, *Asian Survey* (1973), p. 170.

20. In contrast to the susceptibility of the Meo tribesmen in northern Thailand to external Communist influence, the bulk of the Meo tribesmen in nearby Laos have been the most militant minority opposing North Vietnamese aggression.

21. *Bangkok World*, 5 April 1972.

22. *Bangkok World*, 24 September 1972. The three high-ranking government officials killed by insurgents in Chiang Rai province in September 1970 were among the first government personnel to implement the "open arms" programme. In spite of these fatalities, the "open arms" policy has been continued in selected areas.

23. *New York Times*, 23 March 1972.

24. *The Story of SEATO*, South-East Asia Treaty Organization, Bangkok, Thailand, pp. 28-9.

25. *SEATO Record*, South-East Asia Treaty Organization, Bangkok, Thailand, April 1971, pp. 23-6.

26. John F. Cady, *South-East Asia: Its Historical Development* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1964), pp. 143-9.

27. J. L. S. Girling, *Foreign Affairs* (January 1968), p. 388.

28. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-1.

29. Girling, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-9.

30. Millard F. Long, "Economic Development in North-East Thailand: Problems and Prospects," *Asian Survey* (July, 1966), p. 359; Parker, *op. cit.*, pp. 330-1.

31. Bunkong Toemsuk, "Why I Left the Terrorists," South-East Asia Treaty Organization, Bangkok, Thailand.

32. Morell, *Asian Survey* (1972), p. 159.

33. Parker, *loc. cit.* Parker has estimated the number of Thai Communist insurgents in the north-eastern provinces at 5,300 men. Most other observers claim the number of insurgents in this region is between 1,700 to 2,000 men. See Morell, *Asian Survey* (1972), p. 159.

34. Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

35. Charles F. Keyes, "Ethnic Identity and Loyalty of

Villagers in North-eastern Thailand," *Asian Survey* (July 1966), pp. 362-9.

36. "Military Assistance and Foreign Military Sales Facts," Department of Defense, April 1972, p. 6. Thailand has also received deliveries of excess defense articles worth $22,469,000 from the United States; it has spent $13,522,000 for the purchase of American military equipment.

37. *The Story of SEATO, op. cit.*, p. 34.

38. Girling, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 393.

40. *Bangkok World*, 19 February 1973.

41. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 330; Morell, *Asian Survey* (1972), p. 159.

42. Morell, *Asian Survey* 1973, p. 171.

43. In spite of some uncertainty over Thai foreign policy in the aftermath of the student uprising in October 1973 which toppled the Thanom military regime, the Sanya government has retained the same basic foreign policy of previous years. See Frank C. Darling, "Student Protest and Political Change in Thailand," *Pacific Affairs* (Spring 1974), p. 17-8.

44. See *Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam*, Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State 24 January 1973.

45. Editorial note: Since autumn 1974 there has been a serious resurgence of Communist-backed anti-government military activity in both South Vietnam and Cambodia, which has lessened the chances of a long-term peaceful solution to the problems of the area. Thai government thinking on insurgency will inevitably be affected by this.

46. Editorial note: The elections, which were disputed by candidates from no less than 42 parties, were held peacefully on 25 January, but failed to produce a clear-cut result. The Democrats won the greatest number of seats (72 of the 269 being contested) but the success or failure of any party to form a government will depend on its ability to form coalitions with other parties.

INDIAN OCEAN: *With the littoral zones around the Indian Ocean now being drawn as rapidly into the strategic line-up of the major nations as the islands within the ocean, the emergence of Thailand as yet another Indian Ocean power underscores the growing intrusion into South-East Asia of new rivalries and confrontations. At the same time the region itself is seeking new structures of collective and individual security.*

*The Indian Ocean problem - some South-East Asian perspectives

Justus van der Kroef

A SENIOR officer of the Royal Thai Navy announced on 11 October 1974 that two strategic naval bases would be constructed in the Kingdom's Phuket and Phangnga provinces on the West Coast facing the Indian Ocean in order to strengthen protection of Thai "territorial waters"; a month earlier it had already been announced by the Royal Thai Navy Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sa Ngat Chalo Yu, that construction of the Indian Ocean naval facility was for the protection of Thai fishermen and in order to "increase the national security" (1). Meanwhile, on the other side of the Indian Ocean, amidst uncertainty over future British naval co-operation with South Africa, it was announced on 8 November 1974 that the South African Government would commence a US $21 million project to triple the size of Simonstown harbour, headquarters of the South African Navy. The Johannesburg Press speculated however that the planned expansion of Simonstown was so large as to suggest accomodation of naval forces other than and beyond those of South Africa's alone, while some foreign reaction to the planned construction of Thai Indian Ocean naval facilities inevitably included consideration of possible US interests in the matter. In view of the international concern over the status of the Straits of Malacca, it is also hardly necessary to stress the strategic importance of the proposed naval facilities in Phuket and Phangnga provinces at the very mouth of the Straits.

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ONE could plausibly argue that the Indian Ocean problem is of some years' standing, as a survey of the past decade of tactical moves and countermoves in the area would readily disclose. As early as October 1964, the Australian press, basing itself on a *Washington Post* news service report from London, indicated that the US "will almost certainly" build military bases on British islands in the Indian Ocean, specifically that the US wanted a "communications station" on Diego Garcia island in the Chagos Archipelago; that the British wanted an airstrip at Aldabra; and perhaps most remarkable in view of their later protests, that various Asian countries had been relatively little stirred by these plans (2). In 1965, Britain, attempting to give a proper legal footing to the project, created a brand new Crown Colony, the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), consisting of the Chagos Archipelago (including Diego Garcia) and three other small coral islands, Farquhar, Desroches and Aldabra. The Chagos islands were leased from Mauritius for £ 3 million, an arrangement that was interwoven with the grant to Mauritius of its political freedom. Aldabra, Farquhar, and Desroches were dependencies of

*Revised and expanded version of a lecture given at South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) headquarters, Bangkok 11 June 1974.

the Seychelles (from which the BIOT is administered) and the latter "got about £ 1 million and a step forward to independence", but the compelling strategic value to Britain and the US of the whole arrangement did not prevent one Malaysian paper later from commenting that the BIOT's creation was "a somewhat ironic footnote to the policy of decolonisation" (3). Not until December 1966, in an agreement that received little or no publicity at the time, the US and Britain signed a fifty year agreement, permitting the US to build military facilities and bases, alone or with the UK, in the BIOT.

Why this interest in the Indian Ocean? In an explanation on 28 July 1971 to the Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Development of the US House of Representatives, given by the Director of the State Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, the "erosion" of British supremacy in the Indian Ocean area in recent years, the US interest in the "treasure trove of oil" in the Persian Gulf area, and the implications of US "military advisory and training missions" in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia "during the 1950 s" were mentioned, together with the "Chinese Communist incursion" into India's North-east Frontier Agency and Ladakh areas in November 1962 (4). Without minimizing the importance of these considerations, the critical significance for US policy in South-East Asia of the 1964-66 period should also be stressed. There was, for example, the massive build-up of US military power in Vietnam very shortly after President Lyndon Johnson's election victory in November 1964. The accelerating Americanization of the Vietnam conflict put a new strategic spotlight on the waterways and maritime supply lines surrounding and adjacent to the Indo-China theatre of war.

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THIS was particularly so because the expansion of the US military effort came at a time of new concern over a maturing Sino—Indonesian partnership, in turn allied or friendly with North Vietnam and North Korea, with serious implications for South-East Asia. "Thus what we saw taking place rapidly", President Johnson was to write later about these years, "was a Jakarta-Hanoi-Peking-Pyongyang axis, with Cambodia probably to be brought in as a junior partner", and operating strategically in a nutcracker-like fashion, as described by Indonesia's President Sukarno: "The strategy for defeating imperialism...is for Communist China to strike a blow against the American troops in Vietnam from the North, while Indonesia strikes from the South" (5). The grandly ambitious "Greater Indonesia" imagery of the Sukarno regime also amplified the self-conceived international role of the powerful Maoist oriented Indonesian Communist Party, whose agents at this time were "serving as paymasters and intelligence agents for Red China inside India", e.g. through the Indonesian Consulate in Calcutta, where they were assisting pro-Chinese cadres of the Indian Communist Party (6).

Though in retrospect Sukarno's rhetoric was always much more alarming than his actual policies, the volatile nature of his highly personal statecraft could not but arouse concern, also in the area of what Sukarno's officials (to the bemused chagrin of New Delhi) were calling the "Indonesian Ocean". A basic, if much debated assumption of US foreign policy in the Johnson years - the necessity to fill Britain's role as the policeman East of Suez, in light of Whitehall's decision to withdraw most or all of her forces by 1975 - carried with it a natural corrollary; as one widely read US news-periodical put it in 1967: "If the US does not fill this vacuum, military men reason, then Soviet Russia and Red China will be tempted to do so" (7).

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EVEN with the new US—UK BIOT legal foundation, the Soviet strategic offensive by this time was certainly unmistakable. Russian infiltration into Yemen and involvement in the Somali Republic's military build-up were being accompanied with more regular appearances of Soviet naval units in the Indian Ocean. Shortly, Soviet naval officers would berate US interest in the Indian Ocean, linking it historically to America's allegedly "sanguinary aggression against the people of Vietnam" (8). There is some evidence for suggesting, however, that in parts of South-East Asia the increasing big Power build-up in the Indian Ocean area was not perceived as immediately threatening. In Indonesia for examble the abortive coup of 1965 by Communists and "progressive" army officers had created a sharp policy reversal and immediate strains in Jakarta's relations with Peking and Moscow. This, in turn, opened the way to a more sympathetic appreciation of American policy, including

the US presence in Vietnam in which, notably, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos was to join as well. In Malaysia and Singapore there appeared to be agreement that there was safety in big Power numbers, i.e. that the presence of the major states in the region would create a kind of "internationalization" with each of the big Powers watching so as to prevent another from reaping undue advantage. In September, 1969, for example, Malaysian premier Tun Abdul Razak declared categorically that he did not consider the appearance of the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean to be a threat either to his country or indeed to the region as a whole, adding that "all the Big Powers of the world should guarantee the integrity of the countries of the region" (9).

In due course the Kuala Lumpur Government was to modify this hospitable stand, urging, in effect, the Indian Ocean's "neutralization" along with that of the South-East Asian region. However, Singapore has tended to be more consistent, basing itself on the assumption that the big power presence in South-East Asia and in the Indian Ocean region would be a fact of political life for some indefinite time to come, to be made use of as much as possible. When on 16 December 1971 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (61 in favour, none against but with no less than 55 abstentions) declaring the Indian Ocean to be a "zone of peace" and calling on the big powers to halt the further "escalation and expansion" of their military presence in the Ocean, Malaysia voted for, but Singapore (as well as Thailand, the Philippines, the USSR and the US) abstained (10).

As the big Power build-up in the Indian Ocean area seemed to accelerate, the "neutralization of South-East Asia" in conjunction with a simultaneous "internationalization", in the sense of balanced accommodation of big power economic and diplomatic interests, appeared to be accentuated still further as a policy ideal, however strategic needs militate against it (11). Yet, even as Indian writers, analyzing the future of what one of them called the "Afro-Asian Ocean", confidently declared that the "SEATO approach to the Third World has already proven a failure" (12), but that even so the US would not retreat into isolationism under the Nixon Doctrine, the developing international line-up of naval forces in the Indian Ocean began to suggest that the 1971 UN "zone of peace" Resolution was being put under considerable strain.

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ALREADY by January 1972, Peking media, allegedly basing themselves on an announcement by a US Defense Department spokesman, claimed that an eight vessel US Navy task force, built around the carrier "Enterprise" would remain indefinitely in the Indian Ocean(13). More recently non-Communist sources have variously assessed the US naval force as involving only one frigate and three escort vessels, or as one "amphibious command ship" and two destroyers. The Soviet force reportedly grew from fifteen vessels in the middle of 1973 to about thirty ships by early 1974, including a cruiser or large destroyer, frigates, submarines, minesweepers and support ships. According to a US State Department evaluation a "dramatic" rise occurred in Soviet shipdays in the Indian Ocean, from just over 1,000 in 1968 to over 6,500 in 1973, while US shipdays remained "relatively constant", rising from about 1,150 to a little over 2,000 in the same period(14). Whatever the earlier British decision to reduce or even altogether withdraw by the early seventies its military presence East of Suez, by March 1974 the British presence had expanded from the Beira patrol based on Madagascar and one or two Singapore-based frigates, to five frigates and an auxiliary vessel staying in the Ocean area for ten months out of the year, and, supported in turn by long-range RAF patrol aircraft based in Singapore and on the island of Gan in the Maldives. The French, having lost their Diego Suarez base on the Northern tip of Madagascar, modernized their facilities at Djibouti which lies opposite Aden, and now have expanded their forces to include at least one guided missile destroyer, two destroyer escorts, smaller patrol ships, and amphibious craft.

In addition to these forces, various navies indigenous to the area, among them India's (one carrier, two cruisers, six destroyers, twenty-four frigates, and four patrol submarines), Iran's (three destroyers, six frigates and corvettes, six minesweepers, and lesser craft) and Pakistan's (one light cruiser, four destroyers, two

frigates, seven minesweepers and three patrol submarines) should be added.

Last, but by no means least, the land area surrounding the Indian Ocean, like the islands and island states within it, have become integrated with contending strategic networks, e.g. Berbera in Somalia (a Soviet communications and port facility), Socotra island (a Soviet naval anchorage), Mauritius (a British communications facility), La Reunion (French military base), Masirah on the South-east littoral of the Arabian Peninsula and Gan island in the Maldives (British air and naval bases), Mahe in the Seychelles, North-west Cape in Western Australia, and of course previously named Diego Garcia island (all with US satellite tracking and/or communications facilities), Vishakhapatnam (Indian naval base), and so on. Peripheral to the Indian Ocean area, but hardly insignificant, is the US naval facility at Bahrain in the Persian Gulf (15).

On 13 October 1974 Radio Moscow broadcast to the Arab world a report that the *charge d'affaires* in Kuwait of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen had refuted Washington's allegations that the Russians had a military base in his country. But these and other recent Soviet denials that the USSR maintains base or harbour facilities at Berbera, Aden and Socotra have not been persuasive.

In March 1971 the Foreign Ministry of Sri Lanka strongly denied reports that China had asked permission to build a naval base in Ceylon, but Peking's strategic interest in the Ocean area can hardly be ignored. According to one US source "Red Chinese merchant ships, some suspected of carrying clandestine arms shipments to Africa are an increasingly common sight of the Indian Ocean"(16). Such shipments are likely to continue in the future. As recently as September 1974 Chinese Vice Premier Li Hsien-Nien, speaking at a banquet in Peking for visiting Nigerian head of State General Yakubu Gowon, said that "the armed struggles" for "national liberation" in Africa were "surging forward" and that "we are determined as always to give firm support to the just struggle of the African people"(17). There have also been reports of a Chinese base on Zanzibar. However, the Tanzanian government has rejected as "slanderous" all speculations about Chinese satellite tracking facilities or the stationing of a Chinese missile recovery vessel in Tanzania. In contrast, the authoritative International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, in its 1974-75 edition of *The Military Balance,* notes that China "may have formal arrangements covering military assistance and training with Tanzania".

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IMPORTANT perhaps in the long run, particularly for South-East Asian security is the apparent Chinese strategic interest in a landzone that marks the precise geographic boundary between South-East Asia and South Asia and which has the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal as its obvious maritime focus. One perimeter of this landzone is Eastern Burma, along the Chinese border. As is known, between the Burmese towns of Kunlong and Mongyang, with the town of Kengtung as southern perimeter, ethnic Chinese cadres trained in China, and rifles and howitzers from China strengthen the Mao-oriented "White Flag" Burma Communist Party in its hold on what is, to all intents and purposes, a "liberated zone" in Burma, located just across the Chinese border (18). At a time when, from Chinese Premier Chou En-lai on down, officials in Peking are giving assurances (e.g. to the Filipinos and the Thais) that Peking no longer supports external insurgent movements among her neighbours, the continued and extensive Chinese involvement in Communist guerrilla insurgency and subversion in the one non-Communist South-East Asian state which, at least prior to June, 1967, prided itself on its especially friendly "Pauk Phaw" ("cousinly") relationship with Peking, becomes explicable only, perhaps, when placed alongside Chinese involvement in similar insurgencies along the extreme Eastern landfrontier of South Asia, i.e. among the Nagas and Mizo minorities of India. Both Nagas and Mizos operate insurgent underground governments maintaining links with China; indeed, according to one recent Indian commentator on the Naga resistance — "Underground traffic to China continues unabated and small batches of China-trained guerrillas return to the country at regular intervals" (19).

Chinese efforts to debilitate authority in this strategic South Asian/South-East Asian border zone underscores the significance also of what is

likely to become a major target of future Chinese influence in the region, namely Bangladesh. This is not the place to analyze the complexities of Bangladesh politics in conjunction with its serious economic stagnation (20). But, the present writer, after a stay in Bangladesh in mid-1974 would suggest that among the more prominent political feelings in that country today is the widespread popular disenchantment with alleged Indian and even East European economic and political dominance and assistance in the country, not least because of the Indian-Soviet diplomatic *entente;* at the same time there is a continued awareness of Peking's somewhat ambiguous support for Pakistan in its struggle with India in 1971. In addition, because of the pressures of Peking oriented political and insurgent opposition groups that never cease to call attention to the inadequacies of the "bourgeois-feudalist" regime of Premier Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, there is a new interest in better relations with Peking, along with appreciation in various circles for the Chinese development model and even for the Maoist ideology. The Chinese media, meanwhile, in this writer's opinion quite accurately, call attention to the grave drain caused by the smuggling between Bangladesh and India, and its catastrophic effects on the economy of the former, and to the popular indignation in Bangladesh, whether justified or not, over the shortages of goods in Bangladesh because "things were taken away by India" (21). Even in non-Communist circles in Bangladesh one encounters an interest in expanding the range of the country's diplomatic relations, away from what is felt to be a too onesided orientation towards India and Eastern Europe, and such an expansion particularly includes relations with Peking. The significant strategic opportunities gradually being presented to China in the South Asian/South-East Asian border zone should inevitably affect the power alignments now developing in the Indian Ocean.

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IN contrast to China's strategic "border zone" potential is the more loosely structured and diffused Soviet strategic thrust which appears to link the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian areas. At the close of 1971 Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., former Commander-in-Chief of US forces in the Pacific, and an early advocate of the deployment of US power in the Indian Ocean, called attention to the Soviets' "strategic island concept" designed to broaden Russian influence in the world (22). Consisting of a combination of overt or covert military pressure, economic and strategic assistance, a broadening of commercial contacts and extension of air services and of Soviet merchant and fishing fleet activities, the "strategic island approach" seems to look for widely separated but interconnecting abutments of varying Soviet influence over a large area, abutments that may span regions quite hostile to Russian interests but still afford reasonably secure bases from which to radiate Soviet power. So considered, the USSR, already in possession of a western abutment in the Indian Ocean area (i.e. Berbera, Socotra and South Yemen), is in particular need of an eastern one. Opportunities in Ceylon, at India's Vishakhapatnam, and at Bangladesh's Chittagong, though sometimes improving, appear limited for the time being. In an interview with Indonesian journalists during a Jakarta visit in August 1974 Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh ruled out the possibility that India would put the Nicobar and/or Andaman islands at the disposal of the USSR for the latter's Indian Ocean strategic system (23).

This then puts the spotlight again on South-East Asia. Soviet relations with Malaysia, while not overly friendly, are good. Those with Indonesia are improving after a period of severe strain in the later sixties following the abortive coup attempt of 1965 in Jakarta in which elements of the Indonesian Communist Party and some "progressive" Army officers were heavily involved (24). Indeed, in a forthcoming agreement expected to be signed in December 1974 Jakarta hopes that Moscow will be underwriting in part some projects of Indonesia's Second National Development Plan. But major long-term Soviet interest seems to be directed particularly toward the Philippines.

In November 1973 the Soviet press adumbrated what appeared to be a long-term Russian plan for the improvement of relations with South-East Asia designed to check the US presence and contain China; a key role in this strategic discussion was accorded to the Philippines (25). While Soviet accounts of recent Philippine developments do not fail to criticize some policies, nor fail to mention the nefarious influence of "American monopolies" in the country and of the

designs of the "Mao Tse-tung group" there, much recent Russian comment has been notably approving of the government of President Ferdinand Marcos, and attention is particularly directed in the Soviet media to the impending broadened pattern of commercial and cultural relations between the two nations (26).

For the moment, to be sure, there appears to be a Philippine preference to forge formal diplomatic links with People's China first, and there is little likelihood that the present US-Philippine military *entente* will be broken any time soon. Yet, in the future development of the "strategic island concept" of the Soviets, the Philippines appears to be a major target of Russian interests. Moscow well realizes the need for time. Viewing the development of the Indian Ocean as a region of strategic confrontation, one cannot but be impressed by the fact that it took a decade before the present alignment of forces in the Ocean came about. Knowing how to play a waiting game has ever been the Russians' forte.

The Soviet "strategic island concept", linking the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia into a strategic continuum, underscores also the common base of the 1974 Soviet-Indian Treaty of "peace, friendship and cooperation" and of the more than five year old Soviet proposal for a new Asian collective security system. One Indian commentator has stressed that the 1971 treaty arose not only out of the crisis with Pakistan over developments in Bangladesh and out of Indian fears that neither Washington nor Peking could or would restrain the Rawalpindi government, but has noted also that the Soviet-Indian Treaty was considered in terms of a future evolution "into a significant power grouping in the area" (27). Thus, while on the one hand, directly after signing the treaty with the Soviets, India offered to sign friendship and mutual consultation treaties with Japan, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and perhaps also with Indonesia, the Russians began holding out their treaty with the Indians as a model for Bangladesh and even Pakistan to follow (28). Meanwhile, the Brezhnev collective security proposal for Asia was undergoing a leisurely development, gradually meshing itself more closely with the search for territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for sovereignty among the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) group of Powers (29).

IT may well be, as has been mooted, that the Soviet call for a new collective security system in Asia was prompted by fears over the long-term strategic effects of the Nixon administration's winding down of direct US involvement in Vietnam, and over the impending Sino-American *rapprochement* (30). Even so, the Russians were slow to give their proposal any real content, especially incurring the criticism of the Indonesians for their failure to do so. "All the Russians want to do is to sell the idea and, if given the backing of Asian countries, they will think out something", Indonesia's Foreign Minister Mr. Adam Malik was quoted to have said almost scornfully in March 1970 after talks in Moscow (31). But, in retrospect, the Russians' waiting game may have been wisely played. For in the years since 7 June 1969 when Brezhnev made his original brief, and almost casual suggestion that the "course of events" was bringing the desirability of a new collective security system in Asia to the fore, it was the dynamics of regional interdependence and of the growth of common security interests among the South-East Asian nations themselves that led to such policy ideals as the 27 November 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration which seeks to make South-East Asia into a "Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality". By October 1972 Malaysian premier Tun Abdul Razak, while on a Moscow visit, declared that the Soviet ideal of an Asian collective security system and his own concept of South-East Asian neutrality not only did not conflict with each other, but that both proposals were based on "peaceful co-existence and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries" (32).

The quandary in which South-East Asian nations, in principle much less friendly to any Soviet strategic idea, were now being placed because of this confluence of South-East Asian security interests and Russian policy, was perhaps best illustrated by one Indonesian press comment on the Brezhnev collective security proposal. After noting that South-East Asia wished to remain independent from outside influence and that the trend in the region obviously is "towards non-alignment and neutralisation", the comment went on to conclude that "Moscow's collective security system is aimed at replacing regional agreements" and therefore "must be rejected" (33). Without necessarily contradicting such assertions one must nevertheless emphasize that, at least in theory, the USSR

has gone far in letting South-East Asian regional security interests shape the actual structure of the Brezhnev proposal and that, in principle, there is now no conflict *per se* between the Brezhnev proposal and South-East Asian aspirations of "non-alignment" and "neutralization" as Razak has already noted. As Indian commentators have emphasized, Article 4 of the August 1971 Indian-Soviet Treaty expressly stipulates that the USSR "respects India's policy of non-alignment and reaffirms that this policy constitutes an important factor in the maintenance of universal peace and international security and in the lessening of the tensions of the world" (34).

Scepticism about the Soviets' real intention to respect South-East Asian neutrality seem legitimate enough. But one is bound to note that given the dynamics of the region's security needs and interests official respect for South-East Asian neutrality and non-alignment may well become the *sine qua non* of *any* future big power relationship with the countries of the region and that Moscow knows this as well as Washington. In February 1974, for example, the US Assistant Secretary of State, Robert S. Ingersoll, during a Kuala Lumpur visit, reiterated American support for South-East Asian neutralisation as proposed by Malaysia, adding, however, that it "could be fully implemented only with political stability in the region" (35).

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A SOUND reason for South-East Asian scepticism and apprehension over Soviet policies lies in the fact that through the Brezhnev proposal and the growing Soviet presence in both the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian areas, the Sino-Soviet conflict also has come a lot closer for those living in and around both regions. To be sure, rivalry between Soviet and Chinese oriented Communist parties, and between other related movements and personalities are apparent throughout the world. But the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia are the only contiguous areas of the globe where that conflict can have direct strategic and tactical consequences. People's China's media are not only unwearying in charging both "US imperialism" and "Soviet revisionist social imperialism" with engaging in an unseemly "scramble" to win control of the South Asian subcontinent and the Indian Ocean, but also are given to reprinting excerpts from both the South and South-East Asian Press criticizing Brezhnev's Asian collective security proposal (36). Soviet media, in turn, emphasize Peking's "hostile intentions" against her neighbors "in the South of Asia" and assert that the Chinese are opposed to the Brezhnev security proposal for Asia because Peking covertly is encouraging "military preparations of the imperialist circles in Asia" supposedly in order to create a "balance of forces" in the region (37).

Pro-Moscow Communist parties in South Asia have the advantage of being not only legitimate but, in the main, supporters of the prevailing government establishments. Not surprisingly these parties, like the Communist Party of Bangladesh, endorse Brezhnev's Asian collective security proposal and, while doing so, call attention to the threat posed by "primarily US imperialism" in the Indian Ocean, as well as to alleged co-operation between "Maoist China" and local "reactionaries" (38).

While rejecting US charges of a growing Soviet threat in the Indian Ocean, the USSR seems much more vehement about alleged Chinese strategic machinations in and around the Ocean area. Chinese military intervention in the Paracel islands is viewed not only in terms of Peking's efforts to control the entire South China Sea but also, as one Soviet commentator put it, "as a convenient jumping-off ground for Peking's expansion towards the Indian Ocean" (39). On 2 April 1974, Moscow-orientated Communist parties in various countries, staged an "international day of protest" against "imperialist" military bases in the Indian Ocean (40). Characteristic of the meetings and demonstrations on that day sponsored by the Soviet line Communist parties in the South Asian countries in particular were attacks on both the US and People's China, suggesting that the strategic concerns of the one were identical with those of the other. Tying Washington to Peking in the developing strategic confrontation in the Indian Ocean is a Soviet gambit that is hardly likely to be reassuring to China's South-East Asian neighbours struggling with the development of regional stability based on the big powers' presumed mutual detente.

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YET another problem arises in the Indian Ocean's strategic context, and that is the

instability of small, independent, or nearly independent states within the Ocean. For example, on 13 June 1974 an insurrection - largely unreported abroad - erupted in the Republic of the Maldives, involving an attempted *coup d'etat* against President Ibrahim Nasir, led by the Agriculture Minister (and the President's nephew) Faruk Ismail. The coup failed, and Nasir seemingly continues firmly in control. But in analyses of Ismail's abortive venture it became apparent that economic misery among the poorly fed Maldive population of 120,000 may have been a major factor in the considerations of the coup plotters (41).

As other Indian Ocean mini-island states eventually make their appearance on the international scene, the opportunities they present to the major antagonists in the Ocean area become readily apparent. It is not just a matter of the obviously limited resources and economic and demographic imbalances that plague much of the Third World and that may invite external intervention, but the geographic uniqueness of the Indian Ocean's island states and their strategic implications. Of the nearly two thousand islands that comprise the Maldive Republic, for example, only 119 are presently inhabited, and the spectre of "one, two, or three Diego Garcias" in the Indian Ocean, as one apprehensive Sri Lanka colleague once put it to this writer, can hardly be dismissed.

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THE strategic linkage of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia is also likely to become still further pronounced in the coming months as a result of the anticipated re-opening of the Suez Canal in 1975. It is expected that ships of the Soviet fleet in the Black Sea will take over the naval mission in the Indian Ocean from the Russian Pacific fleet based in Vladivostok. So long as the Suez Canal was closed, the Russian Black Sea Fleet had to sail more than 10,000 miles around the Cape of Good Hope in order to reach the Persian Gulf. But the opening of the canal will reduce the distance to about a third. Maintenance of her Indian Ocean naval squadron has been costly and difficult for the USSR.

With the shortening of the distance to the Black Sea via the Suez Canal, intelligence analysts expect the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean to be strengthened. Such strengthening may entail introduction by the Soviets into the Indian Ocean of their new Kiev class attack aircraft carriers (42). At the same time the Soviet Pacific Fleet, relieved from its Indian Ocean duties, will be able to concentrate its strategic operations on a smaller radius. South-East Asia, as a result of the Suez Canal opening, will thus find itself between two enhanced Soviet naval concentrations, a factor not to be overlooked in the context of considerable existing Soviet influence among two South Asian states (India and Sri Lanka) and somewhat less so in a third, Bangladesh (where, as indicated, the Soviets are losing popularity), as well as of its rising diplomatic presence in South-East Asia itself.

The retreat of Portuguese authority from Angola and Mozambique, and the possibility of radical leftist indigenous regimes coming to power (a not unlikely event in view of the Communist influence in some of the principal guerrilla and resistance groups once operating there) have aroused American concerns that the Russians "would soon begin to bid for shore bases" in these former Portuguese colonies from which "to dominate the sea lanes around the Cape of Good Hope" and thus gain a "useful lock" on the Western oil supply lanes to and from the Persian Gulf (43). In May 1974, the South African Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral Hugo Biermann, travelled to Washington for what was described as private conversations with US defence officials and Congressional leaders. Biermann is known to be an advocate of closer South African-American naval co-operation, and one can only speculate, at this point, whether the South African decision to greatly enlarge its Simonstown harbour, noted at the beginning of this article, is to be viewed in connection with the Biermann visit and anticipated developments in Angola and Mozambique.

It has been noted that neither Angola nor Mozambique necessarily will be as accomodating to Russian strategic interests as their fellow African state, Somalia. The point is that in the accelerating alignment of forces in the Indian Ocean today nothing can be taken for granted anymore. As US Congressman Lee H. Hamilton, chairman of the Subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia of the US House of Representatives, put it in the preface to the published hear-

ings by his committee held in March 1974, on the proposed intention of the US to expand the Diego Garcia facility, there appears to be "general agreement" on the significant size of the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean, but there is less unanimity on what military capability the Soviet naval squadron has, "or what differences its presence means" if, in particular, the US deploys a carrier task force in the Indian Ocean "from time to time" (44).

Relations between the super-Powers in the Indian Ocean are entering an era of uncertainty and it is noteworthy, as Congressman Hamilton also pointed out, that neither the US nor the USSR appears at this point to be greatly interested in or committed to inclusion of the Indian Ocean in arms limitation talks (45). *Pari passu* one observes also that in the hearings conducted by Hamilton's committee and, among the documents published along with the text of the hearings, one finds, strangely enough, virtually no word of the effects of the Indian Ocean question on the security needs and interests of the South-East Asian countries.

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THE thrust of super-Power strategic concerns in the Ocean rather seems to be summarised by the single word "oil". Typically, the largest naval exercise ever held thus far in the Indian Ocean area, operation "Midlink '74" last November, involving an eight ship American task force (including the 60,000 ton carrier USS "Constellation"), and vessels from Britain, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey all operating under the sponsorship of the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), was primarily focussed on the Arabian Sea arm of the Ocean. The exercise was designed to demonstrate CENTO's naval strength "in the approaches to the Persian Gulf and the world's richest oil reserves" presumably because "Soviet air and sea activity has recently increased in the area" (46).

"Midlink" particularly served, however, to underline the new strategic power and significance of Iran. The recent rapid arms build-up in Iran, and the Iranian Foreign Ministry's announcement that Tehran, too, now wishes to play a role in the Indian Ocean, have accentuated "Indian nervousness", although in the view of one Indian analyst Iranian ambitions here need not be taken too seriously (47). Whether such an assessment is wise or not, there can be little doubt these days of Tehran's new, confident readiness to make its mark on the international scene. Thus, going beyond the concept of the Ocean as an international "zone of peace", the Shah of Iran, during his visit to Canberra last September, proposed a collective security arrangement among the countries of the Indian Ocean region, including a "military understanding" that would reduce or contain the American and Soviet naval presence, but also replace their naval power with that of such nations as Iran and Australia (48). This arrangement, in the Shah's view, seemed predicated on the formation of an organisation of Indian Ocean countries, economic "and eventually political", as the Shah put it, "but it must be followed up by some kind of military understanding". In the proposed organisation according to the Shah would be included the "riparian states of the Indian Ocean and Australia".

Obviously at least four South-East Asian states, (Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia), would have to be part of such a grouping. Whether the prevailing diversity of interests among the many Indian Ocean "riparian states" and Australia, and the rivalry between Iran and her equally oil rich Arab neighbours will permit of a common economic and political organisation anytime soon, may well be doubted. The Shah's formulations are perhaps best seen as a new verbal *acte de presence* of a hitherto relatively minor power now catapulted into strategic prominence because of its oil resources.

In this equation there remains, however, an ideological factor of significance to both the South and South-East Asian worlds, namely Islam. To India's considerable concern, not only Pakistan but also Bangladesh have recently shown an eagerness to strengthen their ties with the Tehran government and in the past few months there has been a decidedly similar interest on the part of Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. Religion, then, no less than oil profits may give added impetus to Iranian international aspirations, particularly insofar as Muslim South-East Asia is concerned.

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AND so, South-East Asia is steadily being drawn into the alignment of forces in and around the Indian Ocean. In consequence, and as

never before, the waterways and seas surrounding the South-East Asian nations are assuming strategic significance in their own right, and that not just because of their offshore oil reserves. The twelve mile territorial sea principle has made the Straits of Malacca the "national territorial waters" of Indonesia and Malaysia, according to their claim, and passage of foreign war ships now at least formally requires their permission. Building on such concepts as **Wawasan Indra-Jaya,** referring to Indonesia's position at the "world's cross roads" between "two continents" (presumably Asia and Australia) and "two oceans" (the Indian and the Pacific), Indonesian geopolitical theorists are today assigning a new significance to the Indonesian claim to control all the seas and waterways between the islands of its national territory (49). This notion, usually called **"Wawasan Nusantara"** (literally "to look at one's own islands"), has been pressed by the Suharto government in various international forums (including the 1974 Law of the Sea conference in Caracas) and Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik has even asserted that "the *wawasan nusantara* idea is a matter of life or death" for Indonesia (50). Spurred by offshore oil discoveries, as well as by the problems of external maritime assistance to Muslim rebels in the Southern Philippine islands, the Manila government has begun to move toward a similar "island territorial sea" concept. Passage from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific henceforth will most probably become of increasing concern to South-East Asian states and may more and more involve their own territorial sea claims.

Meanwhile, the strategic integration of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian areas is accelerating, if credence can be placed in reports of US diplomatic efforts to organise "an informal alliance" of major states around the Ocean and construct a military reconnaissance network that links, among others, Indonesia and Thailand, with Iran, South Africa, and Australia, and with Diego Garcia at the very heart of the new network (51). Whatever form the ultimate stabilisation of competing strategic interests in the Indian Ocean is going to take, one might perhaps suggest that for the time being not less but more reliance will likely have to be placed on such collective security arrangements among the South-East Asian states as are already in existence and which, like SEATO and the Five Power Defence Arrangements, are now entering their second generation of service to the region. Because of the rising Russian naval influence in the Indian Ocean, Thai deputy Foreign Minister Chatchai Chunhawan has noted, the new "low profile" currently adopted by SEATO may no longer be wise (52).

Notes and References

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SINGAPORE: *Since the end of its reliance on Britain for security protection in 1966, the Singapore Government has been spending up to 10 per cent of its national budget on developing a workable and effective national security policy and organization.*

Singapore's National Security Policy

The Development of the Singapore Self-Defence Forces

*Robert L. Rau

IN the years between 1966 and 1971, spokesmen for both Singapore and Malaysia often pointed out that the defence of the two countries was "indivisible." This concept evolved from the Separation Agreement, which was written in consultation with the British Government, and the latter's defence relationship with both countries. The lack of a stipulated defence agreement when the Five Power Arrangements (1) went into force, coupled with the decline in British influence on defence planning in both Singapore and Malaysia, re-opened the concept of defence "indivisibility" in Singapore.

Singapore and Malaysia can most effectively defend themselves through co-operative efforts, especially where air defence is concerned. The most efficient and cost-effective way for them to use radar, ground-to-air missiles, and aircraft interception is through joint deployment of equipment and personnel located in both countries.

Politics however, cannot be isolated from security matters nor from such other factors as Singapore's dependence upon Malaysia for more than half its daily water supply (2). Singapore's defence relationship with Malaysia and the possibility of re-unification were re-evaluated as a result of the communal riots in Kuala Lumpur in May 1969. Those events heightened Singapore's concern that future racial disturbances in Malaysia might "spill over" into Singapore, thus threatening the delicate communal relationships there (3).

The unpredictability of regional politics, when combined with strained relations between Singapore and Malaysia at the Five Power defence negotiations, encouraged the Singapore Government in 1970 to seek a self-reliant security policy.

Two other factors were of importance in the evolution of Singapore's security policy at this time. Firstly the internal tensions arising from appeals to communal emotions involving race, language and religion, could produce riots and promote political and economic havoc (4). Political instability and economic chaos would, in the opinion of the Singapore Government, invite larger nations to take advantage of Singapore's weakness.

Also crucial to Singapore's defence were the policies being formulated by the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand in the Five Power negotiations. None of these States desired to make any positive commitment guaranteeing Singapore's security from either an external attack or an internal threat. The operative clause in the Five Power Agreement of April 1971 pledges the five governments to "consult together for the purpose of deciding what measures

*The author wishes to express his appreciation to the US Naval Academy Research Council for financial assistance in the research and writing of this paper.

would be taken jointly or separately in relation to such attack or threat" (5). The result of this defence understanding was that Singapore and Malaysia were not guaranteed any form of defence protection. The new arrangements called only for possible consultation not likely to lead to action. A further inference suggested that the ANZUK States (Australia, New Zealand and the UK) would entertain the idea of intervention only if Singapore and Malaysia made a joint appeal regarding an external threat.

In addition to security issues, which bear predominately on Singapore, the question of greater importance to the States of the Malay Peninsula is that of the expansion of Communist insurgency in Indo-China. Leaders in the Singapore Government believe that Thailand's opposition to Communist insurgency is vital to the future security of those States to the South. The question as to whether Thailand will be "a conduit or a stopper" is raised frequently (6). Singapore's policy in the 1971-74 period has been to work within the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) framework, as well as through increasing bilateral agreements, and to back the Thai Government in its resistance to insurgency movements currently operating in that country. The possibility of a Thai accommodation with Communism, should Hanoi's influence increase in Indo-China, is viewed with concern in Singapore and Malaysia.

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IN formulating national security policy the following options continue to be evaluated by the Singapore Government(7):

A. Self-reliance

B. Singapore-Malaysia mutual defence agreement

C. Five Power Arrangements (ANZUK States in a supportive but consultative role)

D. Bilateral defence relations (possibly with other ASEAN or extra-regional States)

E. ASEAN peace-keeping force

F. Joint agreement by major Powers (US, USSR, Japan and People's Republic of China) on neutralization of maritime South-East Asia.

All of the options listed have relevance for Singapore's security under certain conditions. It is probable that one or more will continue to be useful for the foreseeable future. The following options have been or are likely to apply in the following time periods:

1970-75: A, B, C and D.

1975-80: F together with a combination of A, B and D.

Singapore's national security policy has been closely tied to its foreign policy. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's policies of qualified non-alignment, positive neutrality, and active trade diplomacy have continuously worked toward drawing stronger nations into Singapore's economic development and establishing working relationships, thus creating mutual need and interest. Lee's national security policy has followed a path of reliance, where possible, on the old defence relationships, while making a strong effort to develop capable self-defence forces. No one State in South-East Asia has the resources to maintain armed forces capable of guaranteeing total self-defence. A policy of this kind has been rejected by Singapore for political as well as economic reasons.

Options A-F offer partial solutions for the external aspects of Singapore's national security. The major concern of the Singapore Government continues to revolve around communal questions (including questions of religion, language and education) and the ever-present potential for the Malayan Communist Party to exploit these.

Option F, the practical aspect of the Malaysian scheme to neutralize maritime South-East Asia, suggests that the US and the USSR (as well as the People's Republic of China and possibly Japan) will at some future date agree to co-operate in the maintenance of peace in maritime South-East Asia. This spirit of co-operation has not yet been observed.

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THE heavy expense and rapid development of Singapore's self-defence forces is justified by the need for a credible defence deterrent. The rapid build-up of Singapore's Army, Navy and Air Force since 1966 is the result of the conviction that these forces are necessary to accomplish the following objectives:

- Maintain internal security.
- Defend against external attack.
- Enhance governmental nation-building plans.
- Secure Singapore's place in any future multilateral Commonwealth or regional defence arrangement (8).

Although the Chinese have a cultural antipathy to service in the military, a nucleus of a military force existed prior to independence. The Singapore Infantry Regiment was formed in 1957 and, by 1963, it included approximately 1,600 Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other troops who served under British and Singaporean officers.

The decision to build a functional defence force was made soon after independence and was rapidly and effectively acted upon. Emphasis was placed upon effective training which would rapidly swell the ground segment of the self-defence forces to six infantry battalions, organized into two brigades, together with combat support units of armour, artillery and engineers with recruits serving two - two and a half years on active duty. The equivalent of three battalions pass into the reserves every year. The strength of Singapore's armed forces lies in the size and level of preparedness of its reserve (9). The ground, naval and air units are equipped with modern weapons and support vehicles, including light tanks, heavy mortars, amphibious personnel carriers, M-16 rifles and modern communications equipment at the platoon and rifle company level (10). The Navy, mainly a career service with initial enlistments of six years, is equipped with small defence craft and patrol boats equipped with surface-to-surface missiles which serve to patrol the local waters and lower the incidence of smuggling and piracy. The Air Force, also a career service, flies jet aircraft including Skyhawks and fills an important role in the air defence of Singapore and Malaysia.

While the number of persons in uniform on active duty is not great - approximately 17,000 in 1972 (11) - the defence forces serve to assist in development (social and economic) as well as internal security and defence from external attack. The economic uncertainty of 1967-69 and the prospective loss of jobs involved in the British defence run-down were compensated by the annual intake of approximately 11,000 persons many of whom were previously unemployed. The technical training acquired while on active duty has been as useful to ex-service men as to their new employers. An important factor in initial training and subsequent service is the opportunity for non-English-speaking citizens to learn English as well as another language (Malay and Mandarin are taught at the Singapore Armed Forces Training Institute-SAFTI).

In the planning and study period, early in the development of the self-defence forces, various defence schemes were investigated. The Swiss and the Israeli programmes had particular appeal. Israeli military advice and training expertise were contracted in 1966 and payment made in sterling. Israeli techniques, especially in reserve operations and call-up procedures, small-unit operations and supporting arms training and operations, have been especially helpful. As of April 1973 the Israeli infantry advisers had become redundant and remained only in some instructional and operational areas in service of supply and combat support (12).

In building up the Singapore Armed Forces, the Government was faced with the question of conscription. While recognizing that considerable reluctance to serve existed in the middle and upper-class Chinese community, the Government decided that the efficient and successful mobilization of a defence force as well as the need to dramatize the seriousness of Singapore's economic and security status, necessitated, conscripting the best of the 18-year old age group (13). The subsequent conscription of the most healthy and intelligent produced many complaints and cases of real and attempted evasion, but also meant that many socially deprived Malay and Chinese youths were denied an opportunity to serve and advance in the military.

The decision to integrate the best of Singapore's secondary-school graduates, mainly Chinese and some Indian and Malays, into the armed forces has since paid dividends. The ground forces acquitted themselves well in the quickly quelled communal disturbances in Singapore following the May 1969 riots in Malaysia. Other public service activities form a regular part of the training programme in all armed forces units. These activities have been useful in a multi-racial society.

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RELIANCE on the self-defence forces in Singapore, especially the ground segment, is based on three assumptions (14).

The first is that the greatest threat to Singapore's security is to be found in the continuing volatile communal problems and the threat of future subversive activity by the Malayan Communist Party, which still attempts to function in a clandestine fashion in Singapore. The army co-operates closely with police and other auxiliary services (vigilantes, Special Constabulary, National Defence Force, etc., all of which have missions involving the maintenance of civil security). Army units are highly trained in riot control and associated tasks. The active service battalions are strategically located throughout the island, and the units and individual men in these units are visible and involved in the local communities.

The second assumption is that, while the present Governments of Malaysia and Indonesia are friendly towards Singapore, future governments may be hostile. Because of this Singapore considers that it should be minimally prepared to defend itself from external attack.

The Singapore Army, supported by its reserve battalions, is capable of defending Singapore for a limited period of time. A survey of its present equipment, training methods, attitudes and potential reveals that, depending upon the nature of the attack and identity of the aggressor, Singapore is capable of self-protection for a period of time sufficient to bring political pressure to bear on the aggressor. The effectiveness of Singapore's deterrent exists in its ability to defend its vital areas for a limited number of days and to inflict significant casualties on any aggressor.

The third assumption involves the belief that the future security both of Singapore and the immediate region lies in present and future bilateral and multilateral defence arrangements (not necessarily formal treaties) with the Five Power States or other regional States. The super-Powers may also play an important but as yet unproven role as guarantors of regional stability, and this must have an important bearing on Singapore's defence planning.

Notes and References

1. The Five-Power Defence Arrangements, when implemented on 1 Nov 1971, consisted of a consultative and co-operative partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore. Since 1971 Australia has decided to withdraw its ground contingent of 1,850 men by April 1975. The Labour Government in Britain is conducting a comprehensive review of its defence commitments worldwide which will probably result in a decision to reduce its Five Power ground forces stationed in Singapore.

   Editorial Note: The British Defence Secretary, Mr. Roy Mason, stated on 3 December 1974: "We propose to withdraw our forces stationed under the Five Power defence arrangements in South-East Asia with the exception of a small group which we shall continue to contribute to the integrated air defence system." *The Times* (London) 4 December 1974.

2. Prior to 1970 Singapore obtained approximately 75 per cent of its water requirements from the Johore (Malaysia) River Waterworks. A new reservoir at Seletar enables Singapore to increase its domestically obtained supply to close to 40 per cent of daily needs. The remaining 60 per cent will still be obtained from Malaysia. *The Mirror* (Singapore), Vol. 6, No. 40 (5 October 1970), p. 3.

3. Malaysia and Indonesia are considered by Singapore to represent two possible future threats to national security. The existence of residual political and communal problems plus the possibility of future governments being unable to maintain stability in both of these countries are cited as reasons for concern. Dr. Goh Keng Swee, *Straits Times* (Singapore), 31 December 1970, p. 26.

4. The Singapore Foreign Minister, Mr. S. Rajaratnam outlined a five step plan for destroying Singapore from within. The five stages: 1. Rhetoric involving race, religion and language produce riots. 2. Freedom for all "detainees - criminal and political" will produce violence, strikes and riots. 3. "Pseudo-intellectual criticism of the government" i.e., negative criticism. 4. Lack of support for Singapore's defence organization. 5. "Make money and promote your self-interest at Singapore's expense." *Straits Times* (Singapore), 30 August 1971, p. 28.

5. See the *communique* issued after the April 1971 meeting in London, reprinted in *The Mirror*, Vol. 7, No. 18 (May 3, 1971), p. 8.

6. See Tay Seow Huah, "War and Peace in South-East Asia", *Singapore Herald*, 25 August 1970, p. 2, p. 11; *Asia Research Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (February 1973), pp. 1535-1536.

7. The list of options and analysis of these options has been derived from discussions with persons knowledgeable about Singapore's national security policy.

8. For a fairly detailed description and analysis of the Singapore Self-Defence Forces see Willard A. Hanna, "The New Singapore Armed Forces," *Southeast Asia Series*, Vol. XXI, No. 1. (American Universities Field Staff Service Reports, New York 1973); Dick Wilson, *The Future Role of Singapore* (Oxford University Press for Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1972), pp. 61-75; Pakir Singh, "Singapore's Defenders," *New Nation* (Singapore), 4 June 1971, p. 7.

9. See Dr. Goh Keng Swee's (Minister of Defence) remarks in *Straits Times* (Singapore), 7 August 1971, p. 1.

10. See *The Military Balance, 1972-1973* (The Institute for Strategic Studies, London 1972), pp. 53-54.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

12. See *Straits Times* (Singapore), 6 April 1973, p. 1.

13. See *Straits Budget* (Kuala Lumpur), 22 March 1967, p. 7. Also see Hanna, op. cit. pp. 4-5.

14. This data has been obtained from interviews and discussions with knowledgeable persons in Singapore, London and Washington, D.C. Some of these issues are discussed in Hanna, *op. cit.*

CHINA: *The author challenges the view of China as an inward-looking, quasi-pacifist State, and analyses Maoist tactics on the periphery of the Pacific, where Chinese efforts at subversion have taken many distinctive forms.*

China and the Asian-Pacific Chessboard

W.A.C. Adie

CHINA is often wrongly perceived as a landlubber society and landward-looking State. In purely military terms it is usually dismissed as a mere "regional power"; but Mao's China really exerts a world-wide political influence greater than the ancient Emperors ever did, for all their limitless pretensions (1). Moreover, China has been a great naval power, and can be one again (2). True, Mao tactically leant towards Stalin in 1949, but even then he may well have shared General MacArthur's views on the importance of the Pacific. Not only does this Ocean wash the shores of both super-Powers and Japan, but since World War II the area has seen the Korean and Indo-China wars - unfinished business closely linked, from Peking's viewpoint, with the most important item on its immediate agenda, the conclusion of the protracted civil war by the incorporation of Taiwan.

The area of Japan and Taiwan, with parts of maritime and South-East Asia, still mark a containment zone where, in Peking's view, a diminishing crescent of US presence and influence now risks being replaced by direct or indirect encirclement of waxing Soviet power. But in and beyond this zone, including the American continent and Australasia, a range of conflicts at various levels are perceived by Peking as offering opportunities to change the global balance of forces in its favour and so, ultimately, resolve the triple frozen civil war situation on its periphery and remove the obstacle - Taiwan - which inhibits China's full development as a Pacific and maritime Power, - indeed in a special sense a world Power. China's leaders deny that they seek hegemony; but the meaning of this protestation has to be understood in terms of China's long history and some of Mao's off - record pronouncements (3).

Commonsense indicates that the Peking elite's primary aim in international affairs must be to settle the Taiwan problem and to consolidate and perpetuate its rule, by modernisation of the economy and armed forces, over what it regards as Chinese territory. But practical as well as ideological reasons dictate a long and roundabout march to this goal. For this and other reasons "commonsense", as non-Chinese understand it, is not always a reliable guide to China's perceptions and policies.

The development of weapons technology and communications has widened the gap between real considerations of military strength and security, and the psychology and understanding of these matters, even among many political leaders. Above all Chinese perceptions of the world and efforts at conducting international relations are unlike those which the rest of the world, including the USSR and its associates, mostly take for granted. Experience proves

that even in the era of "trick and treat" diplomacy (4) they are still little understood.

Peking's role in the Asian Pacific region or as a "regional" Power in one corner of it, can only be assessed in terms of its global policy. The measures taken in execution of this policy are multi-purpose, short and long term programmes. The overall pattern is hard for outsiders to grasp, while the time scale is beyond that of the tenure of most ordinary officials and politicians. But the main reason is that Peking's behaviour expresses a cultural and revolutionary tradition of style and world view which is profoundly different from that of other world elites. The words and titles used and acts performed appear to conform to world usage - for example, China exchanges diplomats and newspaper men with other countries - but often the similarity of form only obscures a difference of content.

The world view of the Chinese Communist elite is only fully expressed in action. It is summed up in partial and abstract form in Chairman Mao's well-known military and philosophical writings, especially his essays *On Practice*, *On Contradiction* and *On the Correct Resolution of Contradictions among the People*. Although these essays were actually *documents de circonstance*, addressing a contemporary problem in veiled general terms, they give as much of his operational code as he has seen fit to express verbally, in private as well as in public.

The salient feature of this world view is of course the universality and permanence of conflict or "contradictions". Everything is temporarily composed of struggling opposites, one dominant and the other inferior; change is unending. Everything and everybody is forced to struggle or go under, because the alternative to movement from inferior to dominant position is not stability but retrogression. In politics, the Maoist, knowing the "laws of social development", is able to identify "the principal contradiction", manipulate changes in the balance of forces, and hasten his own spiral progress from inferior to dominant position.

Maoists apply to their present environment an abstract analysis, which derives from the historical experience of the Communist movement, - especially their own interpretation of the Second World War and their three-cornered struggle with Chiang Kai-shek and Japan.

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THERE is a systematic ambiguity of roles assigned in the Maoist model to forces in being at any given time, which requires a complete new vocabulary of "Maospeak" to describe it.

In a model confrontation, roles and factors can be assigned as follows:

1. *Alleged "Main Enemy"* This is superficially strong but destined to decline ("paper tiger").
2. *"Puppet" troops* and allies of the "main enemy".
3. *"Pseudo-allies"*. The majority of those forces, whose leaders we get to join us against the alleged "main enemy".
4. The *masses*. These are similar to troops, capable of being re-mustered from disintegrated enemy or "puppet" units into our units. The floating majority can be temporarily mobilised for all sorts of "transitional demands", for example when there is fear of war; and then their consciousness can be raised to the level of committed "peace fighters".

5. *The Communist Party* which acts as the catalyst or agent of change, pitting the main enemy against the "united front" of its pseudo-allies, and exploiting the resulting situation of stress. The key concept here is that of the *"united front"*, which is best understood as a variant of the familiar protection racket. The real target is not the supposed main enemy at all, but the "friendly armies" which are simultaneously weakened by the enemy and penetrated and subverted by the Communist Trojan Horse tactics under cover of the alliance. Action is taken to exacerbate the conflict between "main enemy" and "pseudo-ally" and start the transaction which then proceeds to the three basic stages of strategic defensive by the weaker Communist side,-strategic stalemate, turning point in balance of forces, and counter - offensive. Needless to say, each stage builds up through many sub-transactions such as offensives within the defensive and retreats which are also attacks - in another place, or another sphere of action. For example, switching emphasis from armed struggle to pseudo-alliance, political

agitation or negotiations. "Cast the net wide to arouse the masses, draw it in to deal with the enemy." In all cases the dual approach is never abandoned; the overt is co-ordinated with the covert, the legal with the illegal, and so on.

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TRANS-PACIFIC interaction is playing a major part in China's present international system which dates roughly from the end of the Cultural Revolution of 1966-69. The trends of the 1960s can only be understood in the perspective of China's overall foreign relations since 1949, especially relations with the Soviet Union, USA, Japan and lesser countries of the Asian and Pacific regions. But it would be audacious to attempt a full account of these relations within the scope of this essay, especially in view of the complex inter-relations of domestic and foreign policy throughout the period. It must suffice to remind ourselves that from 1949 on, while Chairman Mao's techniques were applied to the internal consolidation of his party and regime, essentially the same approach and methods were also being applied not only to the peripheral groups of the new Chinese society, e.g. *bourgeois* intellectuals and minority peoples, but also to analogous groups in the outside world. Before his victory Mao warned his cadres that they must now learn to master "diplomatic **struggles**", both overt and covert (5). This instruction defines the essence of what may be called Mao Tse-tung's *"new diplomacy"*. Before considering the present application of this line to the Asian-Pacific region, we must very briefly review some relevant aspects of Peking's "new diplomacy" in the previous twenty years.

From 1949 the "United States and its **lackeys**", including the remnant Kuomintang (KMT), were seen by the Chinese as occupying the role of main enemy. Nevertheless Dulles was originally prepared to recognize Peking; and as we now know, Mao had said he was prepared to go to Washington in 1945. As late as 31 January 1946 Chou En-lai told General Marshall, "We believe that the democracy to be initiated in China should follow the American pattern." Chou also said that Mao had commented "half-jokingly" on a rumour that he was to visit Moscow, that he would rather take a holiday in the United States (6). Then, as now, to limit the power of the Soviets and of elements within the Party who were playing or might play the Soviet card, it was necessary for Mao to try and bring in America as a balancing factor.

The outbreak of the Korean war and US commitment to Taiwan, followed by the Korean armistice and Geneva Agreements on Indo-China, froze the situation on China's eastern periphery, but in a pattern which evidently could not last. As internal Chinese Army propaganda put it in April 1973:

"After the Korean armistice, the game on the South-East Asian chessboard became unplayable (literally, dead, *ssu ch'i)*. The game has now been revived by the Vietnam armistice." (7) Similarly, the Nixon (or Guam) Doctrine and the era of so-called *detente* in the 1970s revived the game throughout the Pacific-Asian region as a whole. Space does not permit more than a brief outline of Peking's policy before this breakthrough, but it must be considered in order to understand the present transitional phase.

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AFTER the fall of the Sino-Stalinist "anti-party group" in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1953-54, emphasis shifted to an internal and international "united front from above" as well as "from below", building up a temporary alliance with the *bourgeoisie* at home (to replace Soviet technicians) and with national *bourgeois* Afro-Asian leaders abroad (to reduce dependence on the Socialist camp). This period saw conferences of Trade Unionists or "peace fighters" from the Asian, Australasian and Pacific regions held in Peking; Peking stressed that:

"Peace is a concept with many aspects for the peoples of Asia and the Pacific. It means more than the absence of general war ... peace and national independence are so closely linked as to be indistinguishable." (8) In other words, "peace" in the region was (according to the rules of Maospeak) to be equated with war and struggle, ostensibly against Imperialism, and conducted by a "united front" led by China:

"The Chinese people have elevated their nation to its rightful place as one of the

leaders of the world... we have set a new standard for the peoples of Asia and the Pacific.. (Peking) serves as the birthplace of the new unity of the Asian and Pacific peoples in their struggle for harmony among the nations." (9) During the period 1954-1956 and especially after Chou En-lai's success at the Bandung Conference of April 1955, China assumed the role of elder brother to Afro-Asian countries, in veiled rivalry with the USSR. The "Bandung Spirit" of that era was interpreted by Peking in terms of the classical struggles, with Afro-Asia providing the war-fearing, neutralist middle forces to be converted step by step into "progressive" forces. National liberation movements in Indo-China were treated as essentially against America as "main enemy".

Bereft of Soviet military support and Afro-Asian moral support, in the early sixties China faced the possibility of a North-East Asia Treaty Organization (NEATO) comprising Japan and South Korea, arising to complement the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in the South. Agitation in South Korea and anti-American student riots in Japan (April 1960) brought about the fall of Syngman Rhee and contributed to the fall of Japan's Prime Minister Kishi. This not only headed off the threat of NEATO but heralded an intensified Peking offensive into the Pacific region, within the framework of the Sino-Soviet conflict and Mao's now open claim to be a better Leninist than Khrushchev (10). The day after Syngman Rhee's fall (28 April 1960) a mass meeting in Peking called on Latin Americans as well as Afro-Asians to unite against "Imperialism" and launched the slogan "expel the aggressor from South Korea, Japan, South Vietnam and our territory Taiwan". (11) These slogans summed up the main content of Peking's propaganda operations in the Asian-Pacific area for the next 12 years or so: exploitation of anti-Washington sentiment in connection with the "armed struggle" in Indo-China, mainly in Japan and Latin America, but also in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and increasingly within the United States.

In 1963-64 Peking hailed the "rapid disintegration of the Imperialist bloc" partly thanks to Gaullism, and took cognizance of the similar effects of the Sino-Soviet dispute in the Socialist camp. These developments imposed a reappraisal of foreign policies in the light of domestic trends in China, and inspired a series of public statements by Mao Tse-tung in support of liberation struggles abroad (e.g. the anti-US movement in Panama and the American Negro movements in the US). At the same time Peking stressed State-to-State relations with non-Communist countries and worked towards the setting up of a Peking-led "united front" among them in international bodies and at conferences. Chou En-lai, Peng Chen and Liu Shao-ch'i played an important part in this effort, directed ostensibly against the United States, but also attempting to beat the Soviet international apparatus at its own game. During the Cultural Revolution, Liu Shao-ch'i was criticized for "liquidation of the struggle" in Peking's relations with Imperialism, and reduction of assistance and support to revolutionary struggles abroad. The collapse of Peking's Afro-Asian alliance at the end of this period (1965-66) will probably also one day be blamed, with reason, on the excessive reliance by the international relations departments of the Army on clandestine operations, known to be a speciality of Marshal Lin Piao.

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IN January 1951, the Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida wrote in *Foreign Affairs* (16) that in Japan's relations with China, geography and economics would eventually prevail over "ideological and artificial trade barriers". Though often dressed up in ideological terms, economic considerations have played a major part in post-war Sino-Japanese relations. As a result of the peace and security treaties with the USA, Japan's trade had to be re-oriented away from the continent of Asia towards the American continent, at considerable initial expense (13). But the success of Japan's resulting "Americanization" was eventually so great that the USA was obliged to adopt protectionist economic measures which made it all the more necessary for Japan to seek new openings for trade, in China and Siberia included. What made this re-orientation finally possible was the Nixon visit to Peking and the UN vote of 1971, which admitted Peking ahead of schedule.

But the pressure to assert independence of America by recognizing and dealing with Peking was a factor in post-war Japanese politics from the start. All four opposition parties wanted it and even the policy of the ruling Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) was ambiguous.

When Japan recovered control of its own affairs in 1952 it was suffering the effects of the counter-embargo imposed by China in March 1951 in the form of a barter trade system classifying import and export commodities into three categories according to their strategic importance, China's needs and its bargaining position. Barter trade was small-scale and essentially a means of exerting Chinese political pressure. Late in 1953 China followed the USSR in moves towards Japan, leading to the joint call for normalization of relations by Mao, Bulganin and Khruschev in October 1954. Following exchanges of delegations and the release of 1,017 war criminals, Japan lifted restrictions on many previously embargoed items such as steel, machinery, rolling stock, vehicles and ships, but trade between China and Japan remained unimportant.

In late 1960 Peking again began to use trade and "people's diplomacy" to change Japan's international alignment and domestic politics. In April 1964 further agreement was reached for the establishment of trade liaison offices, and subsequently newsmen were also exchanged. There was also an agreement for the sale of complete sets of factory equipment to China with long-term credits from the Japanese Export-Import Bank, but this had to be revoked under pressure from Taiwan because it contravened undertakings made in the famous "Yoshida letter" to Chiang Kai-shek. Trade was built up with "friendly firms" in Japan. Some of these firms such as Mutsumi, Haga and Sanshin were directly linked to the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and accounted for almost 20 per cent of total trade between China and Japan in 1965 (18). After the confrontation between the JCP leader Kenji Miyamoto and Mao Tse-tung in Spring 1966 these three firms were cut out of the trade and not allowed to station their representatives in Peking. By the end of the year some of the JCP firms switched to trade with the USSR; new organizations such as JAPIT were set up to co-ordinate operations with a new set of pro-Chinese firms, and the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) replaced the JCP on the political side, with Peking favouring companies closely linked to the left-wing JSP Sasaki faction (such as Wasui Trading Co.) and the extreme-Left *Heiwa Doshikai.*

However, under Sato's premiership the LDP split more deeply over trade with China and anti-mainstream Diet members opposed the Sato, Kishi and Fukuda factions over this; they also proposed in 1968 that Japanese Export-Import Bank funds should after all be made available to finance export of industrial plant to China and that Tokyo should stop supporting the US in the voting to block China's entry to the UN. Meanwhile the Chinese Trade Liaison Office in Tokyo was actively intervening in Japanese politics against the Government and later against the anti-Mao JCP (15). However, no real change in the electoral situation was possible and both the LDP and opposition parties remained unresponsive until the unveiling of the new Nixon-Kissinger policy. Moreover, Tokyo had always felt committed to Taiwan by the peace treaty concluded with Chiang Kai-shek as well as by the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty.

After talking with President Nixon in November 1969 Premier Sato further announced that the "security of the Republic of Korea is *essential* to Japan's own security" and that the "maintenance of peace and security in the Taiwan area is also a *most important factor* for the security of Japan". Peking affected not to understand the nuances (see author's emphases) of this terminology, and it does seem that Mr. Sato intended to demonstrate his compliance with Nixon's Guam Doctrine of July 1969 without understanding its implications, which went beyond the notion of Japan just taking over some of America's regional security burden in the post-Vietnam era (16). By then the long-standing contradictions in the relations between China, Japan and the US were coming to a head.

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IN China, the origins of the "revolutionary diplomatic line" propounded in Lin Piao's report to the Ninth Party Congress of April 1969 and expounded by Chou En-lai at the Tenth (October 1973) are to be found in the policy imposed by Mao after his comeback at the "enlarged" session of the Party Central Committee in August 1966: "to oppose Imperialism, it is imperative to oppose modern revisionism". This in turn, goes back to his line of September 1962, "never forget class struggle" (i.e. struggle against "revisionists"). The development of the post-1969 "diplomatic line" or Mao-

Chou policy has been discussed by the present writer elsewhere (17). Its significance has been spelt out in great detail by a large number of guidance articles in the Peking media and more succinctly in confidential documents published by Taiwan, the authenticity of which seems beyond doubt (18). The gist of this voluminous material is that the *rapprochement* with Washington was simply a "united front" manoeuvre, designed to pit the US against the USSR, detach allies from the US (especially Japan), weaken Taiwan and open up dissident US allies and even the US itself to Chinese propaganda (19). Even allowing for the need of supposed Peking "moderates" to exaggerate such talk to placate "leftists," there is no reason to believe that the Mao-Chou "revolutionary diplomatic line" has any other intentions that those advertised - to change the balance of forces in the world, in the Pacific area and in China progressively in Mao's favour.

The Nixon-Kissinger policy, on the other hand, purports to create a pentagonal balance in the world, four elements of which impinge on the Pacific: the USA, USSR, China and Japan. Its ideological justification may be culled from the writings of Dr. Kissinger and President Nixon, especially the latter's *Foreign Affairs* article of October 1967 on "Asia after Vietnam"; this author has discussed the related fallacies elsewhere (20). In practical terms it reflects the other "Cultural Revolution" which Vietnam and the thawing of the Cold War brought to the USA and its alliance system. In particular, Nixon sought to emulate de Gaulle by "playing the Chinese card" in his bid to make an overall deal with the Soviet leaders, while also cutting Japan and the European Economic Community (EEC) down to size. The US Government was also open to the same pressures to move towards Peking as were the leaders and opposition politicians of its allies: but whereas a Trudeau or a Whitlam (potential leaders of "puppet troops") could safely mime would-be "independence" of Washington as an electioneering stunt by visiting Peking, the significance of the same act suggested and performed by the leader of the alliance was seen by all as something different - a demonstration of "independence" from militarily superfluous or economically cumbersome allies.

In the first stages of Peking's diplomatic offensive of the 'seventies Japan was under continuous denunciation, ostensibly for "reviving militarism" (21), as Premier Sato manoeuvred desperately to satisfy his business backers, who were pressing him to improve relations with Peking (22). The Tokyo press reacted to the outbreak of ping-pong diplomacy as it had to de Gaulle's recognition of Peking in 1964: Japan must not "miss the bus" (23). But Sato was still reluctant to abolish the Sino-Japanese peace treaty and other links with Taiwan and give up the principle of separating politics and economics. After Nixon's visit to Peking, there was a marked increase in the number of Japanese political and commercial personalities invited to Peking, and of Chinese ping-pong teams and other exponents of "people's diplomacy" to Japan. These occasions were used to publicize commitment by the Japanese to Peking's principles for recognition, just as earlier such interlocutors had been made to endorse the statement that the US was a "common enemy of the US and Japanese people" in order to get contracts or whatever else they wanted. In spite of the overwhelming pressure of public opinion and business interests for a new China policy, Mr. Sato continued to follow the course apparently dictated by Japan's reliance on the US for security i.e. commitment to Taiwan, abandonment of which might raise the question of over US$50,000 million in war indemnities assessed by the Supreme Court of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1951. Chou En-lai eventually told Mr. Sato that he would welcome a new Japanese Premier who would respect "China's principles" (24). The same reply was conveyed in stronger form after Peking's victory at the UN. Mr. Sato met Mr. Nixon at San Clemente to try and clarify America's aims. He said afterwards, "President Nixon will go to Peking. But what on earth he is going to talk about is (the) one thing we are interested in".

The Shanghai *Communique*, affirming America's "ultimate objective" of pulling its forces and military installations from Taiwan, appeared to remove the last corner of the rug from under Mr. Sato and the policies he had personified. With a tearful speech, he left the scene on 17 June 1972; his successor Kakuei Tanaka was soon welcomed in Peking to "normalize" relations, with a *communique* reading differently in the Chinese and Japanese texts (25) and a separate statement by Foreign Minister Ohira that Japan's peace treaty with Taiwan was "nonexistent". The Chinese wording of the *communique* appeared to leave open the question of

whether the *state of war* between the two countries was, in fact, over, though an undefined *"abnormal state of affairs"* was said to be "terminated".

Mr. Tanaka announced in October 1972 that "the normalization of our relations with China has an aspect of orienting Japan's foreign policy towards the continent of Asia". This new relationship with China, he said, could and should be made compatible with Japan's existing ties with friends like the USA. But Tokyo's vast projects for investment in Siberia are unwelcome to Peking, which prefers the "policing" of Japan by its security arrangements with the US to any *Ostpolitik* by Tokyo or security guarantee by Moscow, or development of an indigenous Japanese deterrent (31).

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ON the other side of the Pacific, as in Japan, the same policies of using public opinion, trade and local "struggles" may be seen in operation. One of the first embodiments of China's concrete interest in the Pacific region was the Pacific "Peace Conference" organized in Peking in October 1952: it was attended by delegates claiming to represent all eleven countries of Latin America bordering on the Pacific. The story of Peking's later attempts to "use and transform" Cuba and Castro's blistering denunciation of its subversive tactics in 1966 has been told in full in a recent book (27). Using the few opportunities open to it in Latin America, Peking pursued "people's diplomacy" by exchanging visits of celebrities, establishing Friendship Associations for "cultural" links, distributing propaganda and promoting trade. In the 'sixties it fostered splinter Communist parties and guerrilla groups.

The Panamanian riots against US presence in the Canal Zone prompted a statement by Mao on 12 January 1964, apparently in expectation of an upsurge of anti-US movements all over Latin America. This was one of his 1964-65 series of calls for the "broadest united front" of peoples and countries, ostensibly to oppose the US Government as a "common enemy" over various issues.

Apart from opening a trade office in Santiago (Chile) in 1961 and some New China News Agency (NCNA) offices and "Friendship Associations" in other capitals, Peking did not achieve much more than clandestine and unofficial activities in the period 1960-1966, largely because of Cuban and Soviet competition. During the Cultural Revolution and after the death of Che Guevara in October 1967, Moscow made extensive gains among both revolutionary movements and governments at the expense of Peking, rejecting armed struggle as adventurist and building up diplomatic relations, trade and aid. With the upsurge of nationalist (i.e. anti-American) sentiment and the electoral victory of Allende in September 1970, Peking too tactically moved away from "struggle" towards "normalization", seeking to build up trade, offering propaganda support on demands such as the 200-mile maritime limit, and then establishing diplomatic relations. In many cases a stepping stone to diplomatic relations was provided by a pro-Chinese vote at the key UN session of 25 October 1971.

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PEKING also began to use its new opportunities for propaganda (28). The *Guardian*, a Maoist weekly published in the USA, explained in 1972 that: "national and class struggles must continue even though particular governments may establish friendly relations with China. In fact, constantly developing the progressive forces within each country is a most necessary ingredient in building the (united) front."

The same point, often expressed (though less concisely) in Peking publications, also applies to the other nations on the Pacific's periphery and indeed to the USA itself. Canada's Pierre Trudeau at first got ahead of Nixon by implementing his election pledge to normalize relations with China "to expand trade". In fact, as a senior Canadian official admitted, he also had in mind a Gaullist gesture of "independence" from the United States (29). Perhaps he also hoped to gain leverage against leftist and separatist groups. The "Canadian formula", recognizing Peking's claim to Taiwan, was a model for many subsequent agreements. However, some reports on Mr. Trudeau's visit to Peking and talks with Chou En-lai in October 1973 suggested that some mutual disillusionment had set in, due, *inter alia*, to Canadian concern about illegal immigration of Chinese, and suspicions about Peking's

influence on Canadian Chinese, the Quebec separatist extremists, and other groups. Trudeau told Chou-En-lai, "If any country should lack internal unity and harmony, that country could not boldly and effectively participate in international affairs."

Persistent scare stories in the US press alleged that many of the illegal immigrants from the Chinese mainland merely used Canada as a staging post on the way to the United States: as early as 15 November 1971 it was reported that over 4,000 were entering the US yearly. Statements from sources as diverse as the US Narcotics Bureau, the Egyptian columnist Mohammed Heykal and Madame Mao herself are taken in some quarters as evidence that some individuals or organization in the People's Republic are using production and smuggling of drugs as an adjunct to and cover for espionage and other clandestine activities abroad. This is strenuously denied by Peking, and Taipei's (and Moscow's) strident propaganda on the subject has had little effect (30). What is certain is that Peking has tried to win over and organise Chinese Americans and link up with various radical and ethnic groups in the US: these include the Progressive Labor Party, the American Communist Party (M-L), the American October League, the Ad Hoc Committee for a Marxist-Leninist Party of the USA, Puerto Rican groups and the Black Panther Party. The usual invitations and approaches to opinion-makers (intellectuals, journalists etc.) have also had remarkable success (31). And US businessmen are conventionally described as "drooling" over the unexpectedly rapid growth of Sino-American trade (32) - at the expense of Japan and Europe - and the exciting prospects of co-operation in offshore oil extraction and other opportunities offered by the "Meiji era" which China seems to be entering (33).

A recent symposium volume on "Sino-American *detente* and its policy implications" affords evidence that the treatment Peking applied to Japan and other "puppet troops" is now beginning to take effect in the United States, the bandit stronghold on Tiger Mountain itself. According to the Chinese Army's internal propaganda, this was in any case the intention:

"In our diplomatic work and in our activities in foreign countries, we consider the people as a major target. It is for the sake of making the people of the US a major target of ours that we invited Nixon to visit China... Nixon is a man of transition, through whom we settle Sino-US relations and get in touch with the people of the US... If only we work with patience and enthusiasm, Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought will definitely be integrated with the practices of the revolutionary movement in the US, thereby speeding up the process of revolution in the US." (34)

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IN conclusion, it would be as well to say a few words about China's relations with territories in the South and South-West Pacific and with Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the countries of maritime South-East Asia which complete the circuit of the Ocean.

Until the era of ping-pong diplomacy, China's entry into the UN and the recognition of Peking by newly-elected Australian and New Zealand Governments in 1972, the South Pacific was another "dead" chessboard for Peking. The smal Chinese populations in Tahiti (12%), Fiji (1.2%), and Papua New Guinea (0.1%) had more apparent links with Taiwan than with mainland China. In Australia, the simplistic bogey of "Red Chinese hordes" (the "overhung complex") (35) was a standby for conservative politicians at election time; like the Japanese, they also felt obliged to support America's policy on China and other Asian matters to ensure national security, which could hardly be guaranteed by indigenous resources alone. The Americanization of the Indo-China conflict enabled small but vociferous pro-Peking Communist Parties in both Antipodean countries to colour the swing of opinion against long-established ruling parties with the associated ideas of a new nationalism and independence (in foreign policy). This became anti-Americanism, and hence *rapprochement* with China; caricatured as "ignoring the existence of 800 million Chinese", US policy and its Antipodean supporters were all too easily rendered ridiculous. The visit of Australian Labor Party leader Gough Whitlam to Peking at the same time as Henry Kissinger greatly helped his image in the 1972 election, since public opinion failed to appreciate the changing significance of a superficially identical move towards Peking when made by

America, a super-Power and leader of the alliance, and by one of its minor allies.

Some observers (not only expatriates) fear that independence, prematurely forced on Papua New Guinea, will lead to disturbed conditions there, of the type which Peking promotes under the broad slogan of "anti-hegemony struggles". Such "struggles" have already been seen, not only in Indo-China (which needs no mention), but in the Maphilindo area to the North of Papua New Guinea, where Communist insurgents have emphasized, in guidance articles published by Peking, the dialectical unity between Peking's diplomatic *rapprochement* with local governments and the continuing insurgencies against them.

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THE effect of the oil crisis on the Philippines and several other countries of South-East Asia (other than Indonesia) is expected to be serious; it has already given Peking the opportunity of combining "oil diplomacy" with other positive inducements, as well as with increased guerrilla activities in the region. The symbolic deliveries of oil to Thailand and the Philippines contributed to domestic pressures (mainly from the overseas Chinese) which were moving the leaders of these countries, together with Malaysia, to establish diplomatic relations with Peking. The return from the jungle of a claimed 75 per cent of the Sarawak guerrillas in March 1974 (36) suggested a new era might be dawning but, shortly before Tun Abdul Razak reached Peking later in the year to open diplomatic relations, the Malayan Communist Party, which had been increasingly active since 1968, carried out its biggest terrorist raid in fifteen years. Shortly after, a series of assassinations of Special Branch anti-terrorist detectives culminated with the murder of Malaysia's Inspector-General of Police.

The rationale of such activities may be deduced from the statements of the underground Communists across the border in the Philippines and in North Kalimantan (Borneo). For example under the heading "Continue along the Road of Seizing Political Power by Armed Force", we read:

> "We Marxist-Leninists hold that it is beyond the power of the Capitalist system to solve its ever-aggravating political and economic crises... it is our task as revolutionaries to accelerate its doom. Our policies and tactics may be altered, but our basic programme of accomplishing the people's democratic revolution and proceeding to realize Socialism and Communism is unalterable. *Likewise unalterable is the road of using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force".* (Author's emphasis) (37)

A similar statement was issued by the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines on Mao's Birthday (26 December) in 1973. It stressed that:

> *"there is no substitute for peoples' war ...* It is entirely correct for *the armed units* of the people's revolution to *launch tactical offensives in the countryside* at the enemy's weakest points within the context of a strategic defensive and for the *underground in the cities and towns* to bide its time, *accumulate its strength and generate revolutionary propaganda ...* Revolution is the main trend in the world today. The two super-Powers, whether in contention or collusion with each other, are being isolated and given deathblows by countries wanting independence, nations wanting liberation and the people wanting revolution..." (Author's emphasis)

These statements effectively summarize the operational model Peking is bound to apply, in varying degrees, to the whole Pacific area: *the guerrilla* cannot be abandoned altogether without forfeiting important ideological advantages, which compensate for Peking's deficiency in hardware *vis-a-vis* the USSR.

In 1974, Peking has given enormous emphasis to the "anti-hegemony struggle" or "global united front" ostensibly against the super-Powers, and this has been vented at the highest level in various international conferences, and in the UN General Assembly itself. Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping, in his address to the latter on 10 April 1974 asserted that "the struggle to defend sea rights initiated by Latin American countries has grown into a worldwide struggle against the maritime hegemony of the Super-Powers"; he went on to call for Third World economic warfare against the developed countries ("economic indepen-

dence"). But "armed struggle" remains the linchpin, and revolution the aim.

The American Maoist tract (the *Guardian*) quoted above explained in 1972:

"If such a united front against the super-Powers were formed it would have several possible results. Regarding the US and USSR ...it would cause break-aways within each of the two existing power blocs..."

It already has. In the small and medium-sized countries, the tract went on, "the development of more independent positions" would strengthen the progressive and revolutionary forces, and promote the "national liberation struggle" against weakened local rulers; "struggles for independence and then liberation often lead to revolution".

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ULTIMATELY, Peking's maximum programme requires the mutual destruction or collapse of the super-Powers and the restructuring of the world's economic and political *status quo,* with China as "Protector of the Poor" One of Mao's solutions in an era of upheavals was to dig tunnels, store food and "never seek hegemony". The origin of this slogan was the advice given to an earlier Red Army leader, to build walls, store grain and not hasten to seek the Throne; as the *Ming Shih* relates, the chief of the Red Turbans followed it, let his rivals destroy each other and finally united the Chinese world to found the Ming Dynasty eleven years later. As Mao sees it, if there is war, China will be *tertius gaudens;* if not, it will one day have the world's largest economy, and so attain preponderance. Whether this scenario can indeed be realized is, of course, another matter. The strategic environment around the Pacific rim promises to be one of intense economic, not to say maritime and eventually naval competition, especially for control of island and sea resources and routes. Patrol boats have been in strong demand since last year's Law of the Seas Conference in Caracas.

Since the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have not yet attained the national and regional resilience needed for neutralization or self-defence, there is likely to be more Soviet as well as Chinese involvement, welcomed by the local leaders on the 'balancing' theory (38). Even without a Peking-Moscow tactical *rapprochment,* which is possible any time, their collusion and contention is also dangerous to small and middle Powers.

Curiously, the most industrialised country in the South Pacific, Australia, has downgraded its alliances on the ground that no threat can be foreseen for 10 or 15 years ahead. There is a hope that ties with China will avert Australia's economic domination by American and Japan; at the same time public support for an independent, Third World posture, corresponding to that approved by Peking, is widespread, reflecting the remoteness of the country and what a leading authority called the "shallow and facile optimism" in foreign affairs prevalent in the ruling Party (39). If a lead is to come from anywhere in the area it will more probably come from Jakarta, provided that the delicate problems of new oil wealth can be handled as deftly as the Shah of Iran has so far managed to do; but so far there is no sign of an Indonesian Pacific policy to compare with Tehran's Indian Ocean policy.

In the last analysis, the prospects for the Pacific (40) will depend mainly on the peripheral giants of the North, and to a considerable extent on Washington, Tokyo and Peking in their guarded exchanges with Moscow. China's entry into the Korean war fixed an American attitude to China and probably a Chinese view of America which were based on a simplistic view of "Communist aggression" and "Imperialist aggression" respectively. America's alleged abandonment of a "littoral strategy spreading from Korea to Japan through a great arc to Thailand" (41) is often justified by arguments about the strategic weakness and supposed pacifism of China and the exhaustion of North Vietnam, both of which are equally wrong.

Peking has now intimated that Washington is not abandoning Taiwan as the ambiguous Shanghai *Communique* might have led one to believe. Some would argue that a misunderstanding of where America's defence perimeter had been set brought on the Korean war. The present arrangements also offer opportunities for misunderstanding, not only by the Japanese; and also for the *creative* misunderstanding which used to characterise Chinese diplomacy in

the bad old days: "The history of foreign diplomacy with China is largely a history of attempted explanations of matters which have been deliberately misunderstood." (50) Other Pacific Powers negotiating and interacting with China would be well advised not to forget the systematic duality of its approach, and avoid making transitional policies for short-term effect on domestic and international opinion.

APPENDIX

Effects of Japan's switch of trade from Continental Asia to the USA

TABLE 1

Japan's Imports from the U.S. and China for Four Key Commodities (in per cent of total imports)

Item		1934-1936	1950	1951	1955	1956
Iron Ore	China	34.0	18.7	1.3	1.1	0.1
	U.S.A.	—	—	33.6	10.5	12.8
Coal	China	68.4	58.8	1.1	2.9	15.1
	U.S.A.	—	13.9	70.9	85.5	80.1
Soybeans	China	71.3	56.5	2.6	27.4	23.1
	U.S.A.	—	43.5	97.3	56.9	74.7
Salt	China	38.6	8.6	0.2	26.1	37.1
	U.S.A.	—	2.8	10.6	4.9	2.3

Sources: *The Oriental Economist,* Tokyo, June 1965, p.269. The figures for 1956 were computed from Ministry of Finance, Japan, *Monthly return of the Foreign Trade of Japan,* Tokyo, No. 74, January-December, 1956.

TABLE 2

Differences of the C.I.F. Prices of three chief commodities imported into Japan from Communist China and the U.S. in 1956

	Communist China	U.S.A.	Average Price of total import
Coal (ton)	$12.2	$26.5	$24.0
Iron Ore (ton)	$13.7	$20.3	$18.6
Salt (ton)	$ 9.4	$18.1	$12.9

Source: Ministry of Finance, *Monthly Return of the Foreign Trade of Japan,* Tokyo, No. 74, January-December, 1956, cited by Leng Shao-Chuan, *Japan and Communist China,* Kyota: Dashisha University Press, 1956, p. 60.

Notes and References

1. After the rebellion of the defeated Shang, the Duke of Chou said "We must go on, never flagging, to complete the work of King Wen, until it is so grandly all-encompassing that from the corners of the sea and the sunrise there are none who do not follow and obey" *(Shu Ching, 62).* At the beginning of China's recorded history, this concept moved from the imperative to a kind of mythical indicative. "Under the vast heaven/there is no land that is not the King's/to the very borders of the earth/there are none who are not the King's servants" (Book of Poetry, *Shih Ching,* 157-158: both quoted in Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China, Vol. I,* Vol. I, Chicago U.P. 1970, p. 418. In modern terms, as often stated in the Peking media, the triumph of the revolution in China depends on its victory throughout the world.

2. Cf. Jung-pang Lo, "The emergence of China as a seapower during the late Sung and early Yuan periods" in *Far Eastern Quarterly,* Vol. XIV No. 4, August 1955, pp. 489-503; "China's struggle for naval development" by J.L. Rawlinson, Harvard U.P. 1967; John Dewenter, "China Afloat", in *Foreign Affairs* 738, July 1972; Niu Sien-chang, "Les sous-marins de la Chine communiste" in *Problèmes Politiques et Sociaux* (Paris) 3, (16 January 1970) pp. 25-27 and *Jane's Fighting Ships,* 1973, foreword to the 76th edition: "there is....every likelihood that the next few years will see the Chinese Navy spreading its influence abroad". See also *Seapower,* March 1973, (Washington, D.C.).

3. A collection of speeches by Mao, tape-recordings of interviews with Red Guards etc. entitled "Mao Tse-tung Ssu-hsiang Wan-sui" (Long Live Mao Tse-tung Thought) dated August 1969 was circulated "for internal study in China", but has been reproduced and translated by the Institute of International Affairs in Taipei. The *facsimiles* of the 1969 and an earlier 1967 version were reviewed by Stuart Schram in *China Quarterly* No. 57, March 1974. He concludes that there is no reasonable doubt as to their authenticity. The 1969 version contains some 114 items, including 60 speeches and 26 conversations which give a new insight into the Chairman's *real* thoughts. In particular, they show that he loves a fight and expects China to have the world's largest economy "one day"; he even praises John Foster Dulles for having understood the real nature of the Hundred Flowers policy when both *Pravda* and the *New York Times* were calling it liberalization (speech at the Chinese Communist Party Chengtu Conference, 1958, in *Issues & Studies,* Taipei, November 1973, Vol. X No. 2 page 98).

4. On the Kissinger-Nixon policy ("Trick allies and treat with the enemy") see W.A.C. Adie: "One World Restored? Sino-American relations on a new footing", *Asian Survey* May 1972 (Vol XII No. 5) pp. 365-385.

5. *New China News Agency,* 24 November 1968.

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7. Chep'an Ch'i huoch'ilaile; see "Outline of Education on Situation for Companies" (Political Department, Kunming Military Region) 30 March 1973, tr. in *Issues and Studies* (Taipei) June 1974 (Vol. X No. 9) p. 94 ff.

8. "For Peace..." as note 8.

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10. Mao's "April Theses" are publicized in the well-known tract "Long Live Leninism" (Peking, Foreign Languages Press). See also "Leninism or Social-Imperialism?", (Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1970).

11. *People's Daily* 29 April 1960.

12. Shigeru Yoshida, "Japan and the crisis in Asia", *Foreign Affairs,* 29 No. 2 (January 1951).

13. See Appendix.

14. Cf. Chae-jin Lee, "The Politics of Sino-Japanese trade relations", *Pacific Community* Vol XLIII No. 2, Summer 1969; links between organizations trading with China and pro-Peking Communist Parties and clandestine groups have been reported in other parts of the world, e.g. Belgium.

15. *Akahata,* 17 March 1967.

16. On the implications of the Guam Doctrine and the "Second Yalta system" see the symposium volume edited by Eugene T. Hsiao, "Sino-American *détente* and its policy implications", Praeger, 1974, especially the contributions by Akira Iriye and S. Doak Barnett.

17. See W.A.C. Adie, "Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Diplomatic Line" in *Pacific Community* Vol 4 No. 3, April 1973 pp. 356-375.

18. See *Peking Review* articles as follows: "Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the CP of China" (No 27, 2 July); "Commemorate August 1, Army Day" (No. 32, 6 August 1971); "Unite the People, Defeat the Enemy," (No. 35, 27 August 1971); "Grasp the general trend of Historical Development" — notes on studying "On the Chungking negotiations" (No. 30, 28 July 1972) and other articles on "World History" (No 24, 1972) and the "History of Imperialism" (No. 25, 1972); "On Studying some History of the National Liberation

Movement" (No. 45, 1972) and "Notes on studying Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War" (No. 45, 1972) and "Understanding the World Situation by studying Geography" (No. 48, 1972). See also the "Outline of Education on Situation for Companies" issued by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Kunming military region, in *Issues and Studies* Vol. X No. 9, June 1974 p. 102 ff., "The Great Victory of Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Diplomatic Line".

19. "It is for making the people of the United States a major target of ours that we invited Nixon to visit China... Nixon is a man of transition, through whom we settle the Sino-US relations and get in touch with the people of the United States...thereby speeding up the process of revolution in the US...furthermore, Chairman Mao invited Nixon to visit China in order to exploit contradictions... Firstly, it frustrates the strategic deployment of the Soviet Revisionists... Secondly, it aggravates the contradictions between the US and the Soviet Union... Thirdly, it aggravates the contradictions between US Imperialism and its lackeys... A meeting was held to discuss the neutralization of South-East Asia by the Foreign Ministers of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand... Contradictions between Japan and the United States were unprecedently sharpened... Fourthly, it benefits our liberation of Taiwan..." See *Issues and Studies,* loc. cit..

20. See W.A.C. Adie in *Asian Survey,* as note 4, and in *World Review* (Brisbane) July 1971, *Mizan* (London) October 1971, *Quadrant* (Sydney) November 1972 and in Bing (ed.) "China: cultural and political perspectives", Longman Paul, Auckland, 1974.

21. See e.g. "Striking example of Japanese militarism's ambitions for aggression", *Peking Review* No. 6, 5 February 1971 p. 13; "Zaibatsu stage comeback", *Peking Review* No. 4, 22 January 1971 p. 11; "The thoughts may linger, but the talons of aggression will be chopped off", *Peking Review* No. 12, 19 March 1971 p. 20; "Wild Designs", *Peking Review* No. 17, 23 April 1971 p. 21; "No embarkation of Japanese militarism on old Road of Aggression" *People's Daily* editorial, 18 September 1971.

22. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 10 April 1971 p. 16.

23. See Editorial in *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 17 April 1971; *Newsweek,* 3 May 1971, p. 9.

24. There were originally five principles laid down by Chou — see Hsiao, op. cit. page 162.

25. China originally insisted that the abrogation of the treaty with Taiwan should be in the *communiqué;* the ambiguous texts were part of the eventual compromise (personal communication from a responsible Japanese official).

26. See *World Today* (London) February 1973 (R.M.V. Collick) and April, 1974 (William S. Barnds). Other relevant information is to be found in: Z. Brzezinski, "Japan's Global Engagement", *Foreign Affairs,* January 1972; I.P. Shiryaev, "Soviet-Japanese trade prospects", *Asia Institute Monograph Series,* The Hague, February 1973; Toshiki Gomi, "Relazioni Cino-Giapponesi nel IIo dopoguerra", *Mondo Cinese* July/September 1973. Note also articles by Mr. Fukuda and Mr. Ohira in *Pacific Community,* January and April 1972 and Shinkichi Eto, "Japan and China — a new stage?" in *Problems of Communism* Vol. XXI No. 6, Nov/Dec. 1972.

27. "Idylle Sino-Cubaine, Brouille Sino-Sovietique", by Cheng Ying-hsiang, Armand Colin, Paris 1973.

28. The "united front from above" is predicated on the notion of helping against the "Contention of the two super-Powers in the Western Hemisphere" *(New China News,* Sydney, 15 May 1974) involving military as well as economic penetration by both.

29. "China revisited" (duplicated report by Michael Lindsay).

30. Taipei quotes freely from Soviet as well as Japanese and US publications about Peking's alleged "Narcotics offensive" *(Free China Review,* February 1974) Cf. "True facts of Chinese Communist Plot to Drug the World", Asian People's Anti-Communist League, February 1974. In "Les Documents du Caire", Heykal quotes Chou as threatening to drug the GIs in Vietnam; the only hard evidence is the passing remark by Chiang Ching about a film made in Sinkiang, which reveals widespread growing of opium poppies there.

31. See Stan Karnow "American News Media and China" in Hsiao, op. cit. and Sheila K. Johnson "To China with Love", Commentary (New York), June 1973.

32. On this trade, see Jerome Alan Cohen in Hsiao, Op. Cit. p. 46-72.

33. Cf. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 2 August 1974.

34. *Issues and Studies,* loc. cit. cf. *Peking Review,* No. 16, 16 April 1971, p. 12 "...we differentiate the American Government from the American people..." on page 13, however, the world "people" (in South Vietnam) is given as a definition of "Communists", in a note by the Editor.

35. Cf. Gregory Clark "In Fear of China", Melbourne, 1967.

36. On Sarawak see *South-East Asian SPECTRUM,* Vol. 2 No. 4, July 1974: "Sarawak: an insurgency in retreat" by Douglas Hyde. The Sino-Malaysian Joint *Communiqué* of 31 May 1974 indicated that Peking no longer recognizes dual nationality of Overseas Chinese; internally, there have been encouraging signs of a new lenient policy towards dependents of Overseas Chinese or returned Overseas Chinese who have been allowed to re-occupy their houses and mobilized to write for remittances from abroad.

37. *Peking Review,* No 17, 26 April 1974, p. 26.

38. The intrusion of Chinese influence naturally calls for countervailing Soviet influence, whether called in by

by the local government or not; the key point here is Indonesia: see "Indonesia opening to the East bloc" by Hari Hartojo (feature in *Canberra Times*, 16 August 1974).

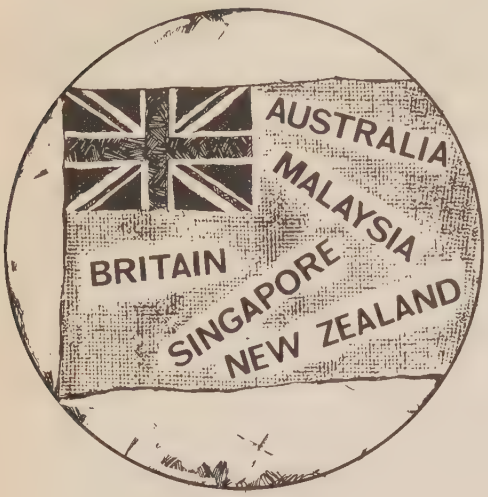
39. Hedley Bull, Professor of International Relations at A.N.U. Canberra in paper given to Australian Institute of International Affairs conference at Adelaide, 15-17 June 1974.

40. Cf. symposium volume under this title, ed. Richard Walker, Heldref Publications, Washington D.C. 1972.

41. Richard Holbrooke of *Foreign Policy* quoted in *Newsweek*, 29 July 1974. p. 17.

42. Arthur Smith, "Chinese Characteristics" (1896) p. 61.

DEFENCE IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA: *"The British and Australian postures on South-East Asian defence present interesting comparisons and contrasts ..... If the British have not yet found a role, neither have the Australians. The difference may be that the British choice of a role is narrowing to Europe, both as her centre of trade and defence, while Australian options are still in process of being taken up."*



Two Commonwealth Approaches to Asian Defence

P.B. Harris

THE British Empire in Asia was built up over a period of four centuries, but was "liquidated" (to use Professor Carrington's term) within a ten year period after World War II(1). Although the Empire lasted a remarkably long time in historical terms, it was stable only as long as it was peaceful. There was, of course, hardly a year in the reign of Queen Victoria when wars were not being fought somewhere in her name and in that of the Empire. These "little" wars, however, were fought not so much to **defend** territory as to **acquire** it. In truth, the British Empire could not have been defended on all fronts and indeed this was well demonstrated by the cataclysmic effects of the Japanese invasion of South-East Asia during World War II, and in particular, the loss of Singapore in February 1942.

At the outset of the twentieth century, four States (the Netherlands, Britain, France and the United States of America) monopolised vast areas of South-East Asia(2). The British Empire was largely continental in contrast to the maritime orientation of the Dutch possessions. In addition to the Indian sub-continent, the territories in the British Empire included Burma, the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang, and Malacca, which constituted a crown colony, and the Four Federated Malay states of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, nominally independent sultanates under British protection.

In 1909 Britain received from Siam her rights in law over the Malay states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengannu. Johore came under British protection in 1912. British protectorates were also established in Borneo; North Borneo was ruled by a chartered company of that name, the sultanate of Brunei became a protectorate, and Sarawak was in effect "ruled" by the famous Brooke family. None of this formidable array of territories ever became an integrated whole for defence purposes, despite the existence in Britain of a Committee of Imperial Defence(3).

Such an assortment of States, acquired in a "fit of absence of mind", to use Sir John Seeley's classic phrase was, in fact, indefensible. The loss of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942 in circumstances involving grave military miscalculations demonstrated that whatever might be the rhetoric attaching to empire, it was in fact a military nightmare(4). Before 1940, the colonial ruler in the region maintained political stability by political means. The colonial states were effectively administrative entities.

A colonial bureaucracy frequently practised indirect rule, by means of a local elite which it sustained in power. In consequence there was little genuine thought given to the problems of representative government or to the franchise, particularly in pluralistic States like that of Malaya. The colonial political idiom

was, shorn of emotion, simply a bureaucratic idiom, permitting the Chief Secretary of a colony to rule from the top according to bureaucratic norms; so that, for example, it was in effect the Chief Secretary in Kuala Lumpur, who controlled much of the life of Malaya.

After 1945 only Britain of all the former colonial Powers returned to Asia. As Professor J. D. B. Miller put it: "South-East Asia represented a kind of weakness in the crust of European colonialism. The Dutch, French and British empires had all failed to withstand the Japanese thrust in World War II."(5) The British however returned to their territories, but the whole *ethos* had changed and the independence granted to India in 1947 was a clear demonstration of that change.

One State, Malaya, was seen as a strategic territory of "vital importance" and in 1948, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, all with interests in the region, set up a new body ANZAM, for regular defence consultations between the three countries covering the Malaysian area.

In 1955, the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting accepted the idea of closer involvement, and troops were sent from the three countries in consequence. In subsequent years policies regarding South-East Asia were to diverge, as Australia and New Zealand accepted the further consequences of involvement in the Vietnam war, while the British refrained from such involvement. The association of these powers was revived in 1971 with effects which will be examined later.

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AS the Empire evolved into the Commonwealth and as Britain put forward a number of theories to explain her relationship with her former Asian dependencies, one hard fact remained, that of deciding how far Britain would be able to defend her residual possessions in the whole area East of Suez. The British "Long Retreat" from Asia began in earnest after the granting of independence to India in 1947. It was clear that the ending of the imperial connection was not to be followed by a network of new Commonwealth defence arrangements, except the case of British, Australian and New Zealand co-operation. In fact, as early as the 1950s the debate on Britain's role in Asia began in Britain itself, as a number of people argued that a military commitment in Asia was unacceptable. Derogatory remarks were made in Britain regarding British ability to defend its Asian interests, and mention made of "wasting assets", "White Knight mentality" and "crumbling sand castles"(6). All bases East of the city port of Aden were described as "vulnerable" and defended only with obsolete equipment. As East African States like Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda became independent, it was even more strongly emphasised that stable bases were becoming increasingly difficult to find. By 1962 Britain was faced with a stark choice, in the light of her economic difficulties. Either defence spending would have to be drastically expanded, at least quadrupled, or commitments East of Suez would have to be diminished.

The "emergency" in Malaya delayed British withdrawal, but the emergency itself contained some useful lessons in other respects. It has recently been said of the Malayan insurgency that it did not succeed because it was "an insurgency mounted by a Communist party affecting to represent the people-at-large against a colonial regime, but in fact representing only one special group within one community of a plural society"(7). However it is a fact of some importance and concern that a guerrilla force which never numbered more than 8,000 men, which never received infusions of weaponry from abroad, which was deprived of an active sanctuary and which relied too much upon a shifting population of squatters as a power base, was eventually defeated "by a force of 40,000 British and Commonwealth troops, 45,000 regular and special police, and a quarter of a million part-time Home Guards in a country half of whose population were implacably opposed to what it saw as an attempt to establish Chinese hegemony"(8).

But the emergency could have reached a different conclusion, more like the Vietnam experience for both French and Americans; in fact, as far as Britain was concerned, it was a situation of no-defeat rather than victory. Yet again, British withdrawal from an independent military posture in South-East Asia was held up by the so-called "confrontation" between Indonesia and Malaysia. Hostility between these two in the year 1963-1965 deve-

loped into a series of spasmodic military conflicts in which the Indonesians lost about 580 men. Developments in South-East Asia in the 1960s conspired to prevent a British reduction in its armed forces and it was not possible for Britain to withdraw because of the Indonesian confrontation as well as the uprisings in Brunei and Sarawak in December 1962. British defence policy in the region accepted a form of reliance upon bases in Malaya and Singapore with a growing tendency to look towards Australia as a "home" base. The essence of any sudden military action would involve rapid transportation by air. It was important to develop long-range aircraft transport capabilities to cover the huge areas involved. While the confrontation cost little in terms of life, it tied up huge resources in personnel and equipment. Total British service manpower reached over 50,000 including about 10,000 naval personnel as well as additional warships and even a number of V-bombers whose capability includes nuclear bombing(9).

In the 1966 Defence Review it was still possible for the British to state:

"It is in the Far East and Southern Asia that the greatest danger to peace may lie in the next decade, and some of our partners in the Commonwealth may be directly threatened. We believe that it is right that Britain should continue to maintain a military presence in this area."

By the 1970s, with almost all the territories now independent, a somewhat different approach was evident. With the exception of Hong Kong, Britain has no special independent responsibility for defending any part of Asia and only a shared responsibility for Brunei (the only former British dependency inhabited by a Malay people that did not join the Federation of Malaysia in 1963). The logic of the so-called East of Suez policy is plain: Britain has no **independent** role to play in any part of Asia, and her retention of Hong Kong depends upon China's co-operation and understanding. Once the question of Taiwan is out of the way, China may direct its attention to Hong Kong, but as long as Hong Kong produces £500 million per annum in foreign exchange, China may rationally be expected to preserve the **status quo** (10).

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THE termination of an independent military role in Asia was not however incompatible with a hope that Britain should be consulted on all major international matters. It was perceptive for Dean Acheson to declare on December 5, 1962 that Britain had "lost an empire but not yet found a role." The trouble was, however, that the United States expected Britain to play a role for which she had neither the stomach nor the money. But the British still had ears for listening, and hoped to be consulted, partly through association with the South - East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and with the Five Power treaty.

There were many who were still anxious about the defence of South-East Asia. Apart from SEATO, a Five Power defence arrangement with Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand was established in 1971 to replace the Anglo-Malaysia Defence Treaty. The new arrangement would be generally loose and consultative. The Conservative Government under Edward Heath had somewhat delayed the tempo of British withdrawal, but in March 1974, the Labour Party under Harold Wilson was returned to office, and pressures to reduce British military expenditure came at a time when relations between Singapore and Malaysia were difficult. At the same time South-East Asia was still a region embroiled in a war, which could escalate to involve more interested States.

The existence of SEATO and the presence of the USA was a guarantee that both Britain and the Commonwealth would be consulted in major international matters concerning the region, while her possession of Hong Kong did much to keep alive a semblance of British influence in Asia. Hong Kong was of course an accident of history and, as such, implied a certain illogicality in British accepted policy, and the whole issue quickly became a matter of internal British politics, involving the broader aspects of British defence policy.

The Defence White Paper of February 1967 had not engaged in any detailed and comprehensive discussion of the East of Suez debate, though in that very year the Labour Government made a clear intention that a substantial withdrawal would become inevitable by 1975. The objective was to save money. The logic was that if Asia was not a defence concern of the United Kingdom, it was then worth saving the

100 million in foreign exchange involved, as well as 75,000 servicemen and 50,000 foreign and Commonwealth civilians. Asia absorbed 40 per cent of British military expenditure. The Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, visited Britain in mid-1967, in an effort to halt Whitehall's plans for military contraction and, though the British Government made plans to use Australia as a "home" base, the Australians were unable to influence British thinking on the larger issue of withdrawal East of Suez(11).

On 16 January 1968, Britain announced plans to end her long military association with Malaysia, Singapore and the Gulf area; this determination became the Labour Government's official policy in 1974. In the "Military Balance, 1974-75," published by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies and prior to the White Paper of 1975, British army dispositions in Asia were given as:

Singapore	:	1 infantry battalion group
Brunei	:	1 Gurkha battalion
Hong Kong	:	9,300 men; 1 armed reconnaissance squadron with light tanks; 2 brigades with 2 British and 3 Gurkha infantry battalions; 1 artillery regiment.(12)

The RAF kept Nimrods in Singapore and various helicopter and regiment detachments in Hong Kong.

The costs of keeping British armed forces doubled in the years 1967-74, hence the economics of defence told against a defence posture East of Suez. On 3 December 1974, the Labour Party Minister of Defence, Mr. Roy Mason, made a comprehensive statement in Parliament on Britain's defence commitments. It was proposed to reduce the proportion of Britain's gross national product spent on defence from 5 1/2 per cent to 4 1/2 per cent over a period of ten years. A total of £4,700 million pounds was involved over the whole period. Mr. Mason announced that the Gurkha force ("that stationed in Brunei") was to be reduced by one battalion. This battalion was to be moved to Hong Kong, whose garrison would be correspondingly reduced by one British unit. The Hong Kong Government was to be asked to increase its contribution to the upkeep of the garrison when the current arrangement to share costs expired in 1976.

Britain was prepared to honour its commitment to the Five Power Treaty and retain a small group in Singapore. No specific undertaking would be given to SEATO or the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in terms of numbers of forces, although Mr. Mason confirmed Britain's continued membership of these two bodies. In short, while the British Government's intention was to emphasize the all-importance of its commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), it did not intend to eliminate its particular obligations to Singapore and Hong Kong and its overall obligations to the treaties to which it was committed. The Opposition Conservative Party made some objections to the proposed reductions but, as the *Times* put it, Mr. Mason's statement "was heard amid relative quiet." Even before the Labour Government announced its plans, the Conservatives themselves had "provisional plans" to cut upwards of £300 million pounds from the defence budget. "Nations", argued the *Times* in a leader on 4 December 1974, "get the defences that they can afford."(13)

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THE Australian response to events in South-East Asia has been dissimilar from the British because Australian defence policy has been hitherto predicated on the assumption that the defence of Australia had to be conducted from South-East Asia. Sir Robert Menzies once argued that: "If the battle against Communism is to be an effective one, it must be won as far North of Australia as possible." Such a policy, and even the language in which it was couched, would not necessarily be popular in the mid 1970s as Australia grapples with the implications of the British withdrawal from Asia. Indeed it has been recently suggested that Australia "is in the process of contracting her defence perimeter from Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Saigon to an area not far beyond her own shores."(14)

Australian defence thinking has hitherto attempted to blend together British and American approaches. Even in 1955, Australia saw herself as supporting Britain in South-East Asia while not entirely disassociating herself from the stronger American line. Indeed Australia fell between the two approaches in many cases. "For Washington", said one writer, "its core (SEATO) was an anti-Communist military al-

liance; for London and most of the Asian members it was an imperfect essay towards a Locarno type arrangement guaranteeing a stable settlement in South-East Asia, which for final success must leave the door of membership open to the neutralist states of Asia like India."(15) Australia appeared uncertain in the late sixties as to the proper direction of her forces in South-East Asia and found herself caught between these two possible approaches.

It was therefore assumed throughout the whole of the Menzies era and during successive administrations of the Liberal-Country Party, that Australia's line of defence began in South-East Asia. The great question was "where?" Australia's attitude towards Singapore and Malaysia should be separated from its interest in South-East Asia generally, just as it was necessary to separate Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war from her interest in Singapore and Malaysia (as well as the non-Commonwealth Philippines and Indonesia). A concern for Singapore and Malaysia in the past reflected the Commonwealth association, and indeed it is a fact of some importance that at least a token Australian military presence is still contemplated in the region. According to "Military Balance," in 1974 Australia maintained a "logistic unit" in Singapore and two squadrons of Mirage III fighters in Malaysia/Singapore.

The Australian public has appeared to understand, perhaps intuitively, the difference between the defence of Singapore and Malaysia and other non-Commonwealth areas, such as Indo-China. According to the evidence of the Gallup polls, there was in 1969 a substantial majority in favour of retaining national service and keeping armed forces in Malaysia and Singapore (in the ratio of 58:32 and 56:31 respectively). There was an absolute majority of opinion in favour of immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. The distinction between continued support for Malaysia and Singapore and other issues such as Vietnam and even recognition of China is correct but may have been hit upon by accident rather than design. In another poll held in March 1971, very few respondents even mentioned foreign affairs as amongst the most important problems of the day(16).

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AUSTRALIA'S defence policy has tended to become somewhat divorced from her foreign economic policy. It is clear that Australia is a regional Asian economic power with a new relationship with Japan, but the question of Australia's relations with Malaysia and Singapore complicates the issue. Foreign economic policy envisages a concern with Japan, but Australia's traditional defence policy envisages a continuing commitment to Malaysia and Singapore. As far as Japan is concerned, the situation is complex. Between 1961 and 1965, Australia's exports to Japan increased by 50 per cent. Japan sees Australia no doubt as a source of raw materials and as a market for her manufactures. The London *Sunday Telegraph* of 18 January 1975 described Australia as "Japan's Other Island", no doubt suggesting, as did *Time* magazine earlier, that Australia perfectly fitted the description of "colony", because she had become a provider of raw materials and an outlet for the finished products of an "imperial" power. These are hard if not cruel comments, but much concern has been expressed by Australians themselves about Japanese influence in Australian life. A more balanced attitude was evident in a Senate report on Japan (under Senator J. P. Sim as Chairman) published as a booklet in 1973, which argued that "whatever dependence exists at the present time is mutual rather than one-sided." The official figures given by the Australian Trade and Industry Department for 1971-72 gave Australian imports from Japan as $A628.6 million (f.o.b.), or 15.7 per cent of imports from all sources; exports to Japan were $A1,360.2 million or 27.8 per cent of total exports (17).

Britain's relations with Australia in all matters, not merely defence, are being re-examined. These include constitutional and economic matters as well as those concerned with defence. Lord Montgomery's conception of Australia as a British "home" base (an idea popular in the 'sixties) appears somewhat bizarre in the context of Australia's thinking on her defence in the mid-seventies and beyond.

Britain is regarded by many Australians as an elderly relative rather out of harmony with the New Age. The commitment to South-East Asia may be regarded by some Australians, consciously or unconsciously, as a remnant of the British connection. Britain too is concerned with its economic relations and these are now focusing towards Europe. Similarly, while Australia's defence pulls are in one direction, her economic pulls are in another.

The Anglo-Malaysian Defence Treaty signed in October 1957 was terminated in October 1971. The successor agreement of November 1971 set up a joint Five Power agreement based on the creation of the so-called ANZUK force composed of contingents from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom together with the forces of Malaysia and Singapore. Within a year of the signature of the treaty, the Labor Government had come to power under the leadership of Gough Whitlam. Within another two years the Australian Labor Party was calling for official Australian representation (in the form of an information office) in the area of control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam.

The state of Australian difficulties regarding foreign and defence policy was summed up in the following description of Australia's dilemma as the Vietnam war came to a close as far as US-Australian involvement was concerned. "The main foreign policy problem for the Australian Government in the latter half of 1971 has been how to close the gap between reality and rhetoric without being ejected from office in the process."(18) In fact the ejection of Mr. McMahon took place in the autumn of 1972.

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THE new Australian Government announced that it intended to withdraw the bulk of its forces from Singapore by April 1975 when only about 150 technical specialists would remain(19). The Australian Minister of Defence, Mr. Barnard, set out the Labor Government's attitude in a parliamentary statement made on 9 April 1974, which is of fundamental importance in presenting the Government's thinking on South-East Asia. The Minister said: "We are maintaining full support to the Five Power arrangements, and the two Royal Australian Air Force Mirage squadrons in Malaysia comprise the largest single contribution of the three external powers, Australia, Britain and New Zealand, and they help Malaysia and Singapore in developing their air defence capability." He described SEATO as "a more realistic organisation which we believe is capable of worthwhile work."(20) He concluded: "We now see no grounds that would move us to depart from our firmly held policy not to renounce international treaties into which Australia has entered."(21)

Some opposition parliamentarians saw an inconsistency between the proposed withdrawal of Australian forces from South-East Asia and a statement of a continuing commitment to the Five Power agreement. They also argued that Australia ought to be involved in South-East Asia in a more positive military sense, firstly because of the inherent political instability of the area, and also because of the competition and potential rivalry of the great powers in the region. Senator Sim stated: "Defence policies should not be based upon wishful thinking but rather on an assessment of the situation in the world which at present is one of flux and uncertainty."(22)

Senator Sim quoted from the Dyason Memorial Lecture given by Mr. S. Rajaratnam, Singapore's Foreign Minister, in which the latter stated:

"If power is defined, as it should be, not merely as military power but as economic power and cultural attraction as well, then what is likely to emerge in South-East Asia is a multiple system of great power balance. These powers will contest for influence in the region because its strategic importance and its great economic potential have not been diminished in any way as a result of the *detente* and dismantling of the Cold War structure."

The Opposition argued that the Five Power Treaty was "supposed to be a mutual defence treaty; not one where Australia seeks all the advantages and refuses to accept any of the responsibilities"(23). They deplored the reduction of Government defence expenditure from 3.5 per cent to 2.9 per cent and argued that the Government had countenanced an "alarming weakening of the Australian defence capability and capacity".

The defence of Australia, as set out by the Minister of Defence in April 1974 was to depend upon a "viable core force capable of timely expansion", as "the long term prospect for global stability and avoidance of general war and the limitation of local conflicts remains favourable". At the same time, because of "our relative remoteness and non-involvement, the prospect of direct strategic pressure against Australian interests by a major power, as distinct from possible political pressures, remains remote".(24) The debate was lively both inside

and outside Parliament and even, at times, bitter.

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THE British and Australian postures on South-East Asia defence present interesting comparisons and contrasts. Neither power has a major interest in the region but neither wishes to be totally unrepresented in a military sense. At the same time, both look in different directions as far as economics is concerned. While Australia looks to Japan, Britain looks increasingly to the European community and, whatever the internal disagreements over Europe it is very unlikely that Britain would take up the international posture it once had. Neither Britain nor Australia would wish to retain large-scale land forces in Asia including conscript armies together with all the supporting arms and possible obsolete equipment.

Defence questions have different political implications in London and Canberra. In the British case there is little real political difference between the two major parties, although both are involved in profound internal debates over Europe rather than Asia. This being so, informed opinion in Britain agrees that NATO is of paramount importance, described by the Defence Minister as the 'linch-pin' of British defence policy. In the Australian case, however, there is no equivalent to NATO to which Australians can turn, and it may be argued that Australian defence policy is still in a 'developing' phase. The British have opted for a more circumscribed role than hitherto. The Australian Government however is by no means abandoning the world stage. Complaints have been made, for example, about nuclear tests, and protests have been delivered to the French, Chinese and Indian Governments, on the grounds that "our policy is to strengthen the structure of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and anything which undermines the structure is a cause of concern for us".

At the same time Australians have become acutely conscious that they have a role to play. Britain has become, by contrast, because of the limitations imposed on it, no more than a middle power. If the British have not yet found a role, neither have the Australians. The difference may be that the British choice of a role is narrowing to Europe, both as her centre of trade and defence, while Australian options are still in process of being taken up.

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RIVER DEVELOPMENT: *By the year 2000 an estimated 130,000,000 will be living in the Mekong river area. In anticipation of their needs the Mekong Committee is planning a series of projects to harness the river for hydropower and irrigation. Despite the insecurity of much of the Mekong basin area, the Committee has already been successful in co-ordinating several important international projects on the ground.*

Mekong Project: Case Study in International Development

I.S. Macaspac

SEVENTEEN years ago, when the development on a co-operative basis of the lower Mekong basin was formally initiated, few if any took the decision seriously. The four countries concerned, i.e. the Khmer Republic (Cambodia), Laos, Thailand and South Vietnam, were keenly aware of their urgent needs for development and saw in the Mekong project the means to meet those needs. They did not then bother, perhaps rightly, to consider the full implications of undertaking such a gigantic project. At that time very little basic information was known about the river and its basin to permit even elementary planning; neither was there any experience in harnessing the basin's resources. No man-made structures except a minor hydropower dam across a small tributary in Vietnam existed.

Furthermore the political conditions were not favourable for such an ambitious co-operative undertaking. The capital requirements were enormous, not to mention the skills needed, and the countries involved were not economically and technologically advanced enough to match these needs. While the prospects of the project meeting growing food needs were appreciated, many doubted if the huge amount of power which would be generated could be absorbed. More important, there had been very little, if any, experience in technical and economic co-operation between the four countries. It has been in the role of co-ordinating agent that the work of the Committee for the Co-ordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin has been so crucial. This Bangkok-based body is an offshoot of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP — formerly ECAFE), and the purpose of this study is to pinpoint some of its achievements.

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TO date twelve of some eighty planned tributary projects in the basin have been constructed. On 26 June 1974, a US$24.7 million development fund agreement for implementing the second phase of the biggest tributary project built so far, i.e. the Nam Ngum project in Laos, was signed at the Manila headquarters of the Asian Development Bank, which is acting as financial co-ordinator of the project. The agreement will lead to the exploitation of the project's full power potential of 150,000 kilowatts. In addition, the feasibility studies of two of seventeen economically promising projects on the mainstem of the river, i.e. Pa Mong (between Laos and Thailand) and Sambor in the Khmer Republic, have been completed. The Pa Mong project has a firm power potential of 4.8 million kilowatts and is capable of irrigating some 720,000 hectares in Thailand and Laos.

To-day much more data on the hydrology, hydrography, geology and topography of the river is known. More information has been collected on soil types and land capabilities; and addi-

tional economic, demographic and other social information necessary to study the economic feasibility of more projects exist. The demand for electric power has been estimated up to the year 2000, and studies are in progress on the domestic and global demand for the basin's principal agricultural products. Based on available information, the Mekong Committee prepared a 30-year Basin plan, 1970-2000, in order to give itself a broad perspective for long-term development and to provide a framework for short-term project planning.

The need for accelerating the development of the basin is real and urgent. Income levels per capita in the rural areas (less than US$100) in three of the member countries, i.e. Khmer Republic, Laos and South Vietnam are among the lowest in the world. These incomes do not allow the enjoyment of even a minimum standard of health, efficiency and general well-being. During the last ten years, war and disorder have exacerbated the economic and social difficulties from which the three Indo-Chinese countries have been suffering. The urgent need to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production in these three countries, which are still importing the cereal, means that, among other measures, irrigation development must be accelerated. The current energy crisis has dealt a further blow to their economies and made thermal power prohibitive in cost. The immediate development of alternative hydropower projects must be a high priority now.

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IN the face of the region's economic needs, failure to harness the river is a sheer waste of resources. Yearly, the Mekong river discharges some 400 million acre feet of water into the South China Sea which could otherwise have gone for irrigating often drought-stricken areas and thereby increasing agricultural output. Furthermore, if the Mekong is controlled, flood damage could be considerably reduced and navigation improved in longer stretches of the river.

The hydropower aspects of the project bring the quickest economic returns, but the Committee attaches top priority to irrigation and agricultural development. Some 75-85 per cent of the area's population live from agriculture. In addition to the existing experimental and demonstration farms, the Committee recently sponsored the establishment of pioneer agricultural projects of 5-10,000 hectares to derive experience for more extensive irrigated agricultural development projects covering an area of some five million hectares. The Committee is also concerned with the human, social and institutional aspects of development, such as land reform, farmers' education, low-cost credit, provision of inputs, co-operatives, marketing assistance, improvement of the infrastructure, and provision of incentives. These measures will, it is hoped, tend to stimulate greater effort on the part of the farmers, and increase production while reducing its cost. The policy objective is to improve the quality of life of the masses by enabling them to share in the benefits of development.

The Mekong Committee is also concerned with the environmental consequences of development. It has undertaken studies on the projects' impact on waterborne diseases, water quality, fisheries production and watershed management. It has created an *ad hoc* panel of experts to examine the Committee's environmental programme and to plan further studies for predicting adverse environmental consequences of development and taking timely remedial measures.

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THE lower Mekong riparian countries have not yet reached an advanced stage of co-operation on the ground, although agreement has been reached to operate as one integral unit. This means that the planning, construction and reservoir regulation of even the tributary projects within national boundaries have to be done with the approval of all four countries. The Committee has adopted a declaration of principles on the co-operative utilization of Mekong waters. Other co-operative activities involve group training, exchange of technical, economic and social information, a flood warning system, and collective action to raise funds for projects ready for implementation.

A more significant co-operative arrangement has been worked out between Laos and Thailand in the form of an exchange of hydroelectic power between the two countries. While the Nam Ngum project in Laos was under construction, power was supplied from the Nam Pong project in North-east Thailand. After the completion of the Laotian project, the flow of electricity was

reversed. This was made possible by the construction of a transmission line across the Mekong river, the inauguration of which was marked by a mid-river meeting of the Kings of Laos and Thailand. The construction of the transmission line has given Laos, a land-locked country and with practically no commodity export earnings, a chance to sell the Nam Ngum power to Thailand. At the same time, Thailand finds the arrangement economically advantageous especially at the present time when the price of thermal power has risen to prohibitive levels.

The real test of co-operation and the viability of the Mekong project as a co-operative undertaking will lie in the implementation of a mainstem project such as the Pa Mong project. The benefits from Pa Mong will be enjoyed not only by Laos and Thailand but also the Khmer Republic and Vietnam. The latter countries are due to get more water for irrigation during the dry season to permit increased agricultural production in tens of thousands of hectares not to mention the reduction of crop losses due to the reduction of salinity intrusion into the Delta. Pa Mong will also increase the power potential of several run-of-the-river projects downstream from the dam.

There are a number of problems yet to be faced by the decision-makers in the implementation of the Pa Mong project particularly in Thailand and Laos. Some 200,000 people mainly from Loei, Thailand and Vang Vieng, Laos will have to be relocated as a result of the construction of the dam, but present studies are in progress to assess the various options for resettlement open to the reservoir area population. The possibility of constructing protective dikes where economically possible is also being studied. Although the project is economically attractive (its internal rate of return has been estimated to be at least 16 per cent), the mobilization of finance may be a problem, both regarding external finance and local currency expenditures. In view of the size of the investment, the project could cause budgetary difficulties during construction, but this could be met through borrowings from external and internal sources.

In the last analysis, the decision to undertake Pa Mong, one of the largest multi-purpose water resources development undertakings in the world, is a question of political will on the part of the countries concerned, principally Thailand and Laos. At one point during the construction of the Nam Ngum project in Laos, its completion was threatened by military operations in the area, but the warring parties finally agreed to spare the project from destruction.

During periods of political tension in the area, the Mekong Committee meetings were the only forums in which the representatives of the four countries were permitted to get together and make commitments in the regional interest. The Mekong project has reached a point where it is now faced with equally grave challenges in terms of difficult decisions on the major economic, financial, social and political issues involved.

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THE Mekong Committee's terms of reference are to "promote, co-ordinate, supervise and control the planning and investigation of water resources development projects in the lower Mekong basin". It is supported by a Secretariat headed by an Executive Agent, and its staff is composed of a multi-disciplinary group of experts. The Committee has the benefit of counsel from an advisory board of specialists.

Many countries have extended financial assistance to the Mekong Committee's project. Twenty-five governments support the project in addition to twelve UN specialized agencies, two international banks, five foundations and several other business entities. Donor countries exercise the option as to the area of development they wish to assist, taking into account the needs for development of the individual countries concerned: the United States has assisted in a feasibility study of the Pa Mong project, the biggest project being planned, and which consists of resettlement studies and systems analysis; Japan, in the study of promising tributary projects and feasibility investigations of some of them; Belgium, in navigation improvement; the Netherlands, in the study of the agricultural possibilities of the Delta; the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank served as co-ordinators for finance and construction for the first and second stages respectively of the biggest tributary project (Nam Ngum) constructed so far; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assisted in agricultural research and demonstration; the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in the study of power-oriented indus-

tries; and the Ford Foundation financed an archaeological study and an environmental assessment programme.

Altogether the Committee had, by the end of 1973, mobilized some US$270 million for pre-investment studies and construction, of which US$195 million or 68 per cent came from external sources. The fact that the project has attracted the participation of so many countries makes it doubly international in character. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) continues to extend assistance to the Mekong Committee whose project is the biggest single development scheme under the UNDP's current 5-year programme of global aid.

The Mekong Committee's creation was sponsored by ESCAP, which is committed to the promotion of regional development. Among the members of ESCAP are many of the major developed countries e.g. US, Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and France, and these are among the Mekong project's principal donors. It is doubtful if the four riparian countries would have arrived at a decision to co-operate on the Mekong without outside sponsorship and assistance. The aid benefits reach the area in various forms: studies of tributary projects, experimental and demonstration farms, navigation studies and training of riparian personnel. It is the job of the Mekong Committee to apportion these as equitably as possible between the four countries. Hopefully the Governments represented on the Mekong Committee will maintain the co-operative spirit which has been built up over the years and, in this manner, realize this opportunity for improving the quality of life for the people (population estimates for the year 2000 are put at 130,000,000) living in one of the most economically, socially and politically depressed areas of the world.

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